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THE SERMON BIBLE

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2 CORINTHIANS—PHILIPPIANS

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INTRODUCTION.

ON Second Corinthians there are commentaries by Agar Beet, Olshausen, Farrar (in the "Pulpit Commentary"), and expository lectures by F. W. Robertson. On Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians there are commentaries by Bishop Ellicott. Prof. G. G. Findlay writes on Galatians in the "Expositor's Bible." There is a commentary on Galatians by Prof. Agar Beet, and one on Ephesians by Olshausen. The Pauline Commentaries of Bishop Lightfoot stand above all others. Macpherson has published a valuable theological commentary on Ephesians. Expository sermons on Galatians have been published by Dr. J. Brown and Rev. S. Pearson; on Ephesians by Candlish, Dale, and Findlay ("Expositor's Bible"); on Philippians by Dr. J. Hutchison, Prof. Beet, and Dean Vaughan.

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II. CORINTHIANS.

REFERENCES: i. 2.—R. W. Dale, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 257. i. 3, 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 175; W. J. Knox-Little, *Manchester Sermons*, p. 282. i. 3-5.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 331; vol. xxi., p. 147; W. Cuthbertson, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 211; *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 193; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85. i. 3-6.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 392.

Chap. i., ver. 4.—"Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

AFFLICTION, a School of Comfort.

I. Sometimes we look with pleasure on those who have never been afflicted. We look with a smile of interest upon the smooth brow and open countenance, and our hearts thrill within us at the ready laugh or the piercing glance. There is a buoyancy and freshness of mind in those who have never suffered which, beautiful as it is, is perhaps scarcely suitable and safe in sinful man. It befits an angel; it befits very young persons and children, who have never been delivered over to their three great enemies. I will not dare to deny that there are those whose white garments and unfading chaplets show that they have a right to rejoice always, even till God takes them. But this is not the case of many, whom earth soils, and who lose their right to be merry-hearted. God brings His saints into pain, that they may be like what Christ was, and may be led to think of Him, not of themselves.

II. Taught by our own pain, our own sorrow, nay, by our own sin, we shall have hearts and minds exercised for every service of love towards those who need it. We shall in our measure be comforters after the image of the Almighty Paraclete, and that in all senses of the word—advocates, assistants, soothing aids. Our words of advice, our very manner, voice, and look, will be gentle and tranquillising, as of those who have borne their cross after Christ. We shall not pass by His little ones rudely, as

the world does. The voices of the widow and the orphan, the poor and the destitute, will at once reach our ears, however low they speak. Our hearts will open towards them, our words and deeds befriend them. The ruder passions of man's nature, pride and anger, envy and strife, which so disorder the Church, these will be quelled and brought under in others by the earnestness and kindness of our admonition. Thus, instead of being the selfish creatures that we were by nature, grace, acting through suffering, tends to make us ready teachers and witnesses of truth to all men.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 300.

REFERENCES: i. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 13; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 43; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 249. i. 6.—E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 327. i. 6-7.—S. Martin, *Comfort in Trouble*, p. 66. i. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1536.

Chap. i., ver. 11.—"Helping together."

I. WE must take care we do not hinder. We may hinder by indifference. People who hinder are often people who live at ease. Take care you do not hinder any good work, do not dishearten any workers; if you do not agree with their methods, do your best not to injure their work.

II. Nerve yourself to triumph over hindrances. Your life and mine ought to mean conquest. We want victory everywhere, Christ glorified in all our life. The service of Christ never wearies. There is no service in the world you would not be tired with, if you had to live and work for humanity alone.

III. Let us approach the subject along the line of variety of work. There is a great deal to be said for the numerous ways in which we may help. Some people in the world have a faculty for helping, though not dowered with rich gifts. Where the spirit of helping together is, it is not only the result that is attained, but in this moulding process we lose our angularities and divisions.

IV. This helping together will be rewarded in ways we little think of. First try to realise the world's great misery of selfishness by listening to its sob and sigh and broken song. As Christians we are happy in helping. We are all disciplined by it. There is a reflex influence in all we do upon ourselves. Idleness is the parent of all sins—that is, the cradle in which they are born; and one good result of helping others is this, that to help others I must have strength myself. It drives me to Christ for grace of forbearance and strength to overcome

obstacles in my way. Happy if, when evening comes, we can feel that we have been thrown together for great and loyal purposes for Christ's work.

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 365.

REFERENCE: i. 11, 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 507.

Chap. i., ver. 12.—"For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

SIMPLICITY and Sincerity.

I. Simplicity. The word means singleness—singleness of mind, purpose, character, life. The opposite of this is duplicity—doubleness in speech, behaviour, heart. And the world is full of that, as every one knows. There is a Divine simplicity which we ought to preserve in every part of our life. Most of all should we keep this pure simplicity in the highest part of it—in the religious sphere; avoiding, on the one hand, the high phraseology which expresses far more than we believe and mean, and, on the other, the compromising silence, or brief and hesitating speech, which expresses less than we believe and feel and are. To be far more anxious to stand well with our own conscience than in the opinions of others about us, and to be supremely anxious to please God and to live in his love and according to His laws—such is Christian simplicity.

II. Sincerity is the next word, and the two are much akin. They are almost as twin sisters. The word "sincerity" means literally translucence or clearness of mind. It is called godly sincerity, either because it is like His own, like the openness and honesty of all His procedure before men and angels, or because it comes directly from Him into the heart and life of its possessor. The sincere have their sincerity from Him. They cannot but be sincere when they yield to His gracious nurture. He who draws the water, pure, from the filtering earth, and holds it there—a little gem of beauty, a little specimen of His handiwork—in the deep translucent well where you may see your image, clarifies the souls that yield to Him, as He takes them through the strain of circumstances, and through the cleansing atmosphere of atonement, and through the vivifying spirit-air, until they become sincere and without offence, fit for Divine preservation unto the day of Christ.

A. RALEIGH, *The Little Sanctuary*, p. 66.

REFERENCES: i. 12.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93; H. Crosby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 27. i. 15-22.—F. W.

Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 269. i. 17.—J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 289; J. P. Gledstone, *Ibid*, vol. xviii., p. 393. i. 18-20.—S. Holl, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 161.

Chap. i., ver. 19.—"In Him was yea."

I. THERE is a cry of the soul after certainty and satisfaction. Christ solves the problem of nature. The soul cries in nature. The soul lifts up its painful wail, its note of grief. "In Him is yea." He was and is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person. As light paints likenesses, so that I may have the express image of a person I have never seen, so Christ is the portrait of God. He suits the personality of God; the octaves of eternity run along and through the whole architrave of nature. Light streams through all things when we believe in Him.

II. "In Him is yea." He reconciles the contradictions of Scripture not less than the contradictions of nature, for unbelief grows out of contradiction. We do not believe in the unity presiding over our life, because of its contradiction; we do not believe in the unity of Scripture, because it seems to be laden with contradictions: they startle and appal us. Christ is the synthesis of being, and by Him all things subsist. I advise thee to carry all thy difficulties to Christ, and those which loom like threatening clouds over the pages of Scripture, carry all to Christ. From ever of old, God has been fostering spirits to whom to speak; giving, in all ages, as much as the consciousness, that is, knowledge or conscience, that is, the moral susceptibility, could bear. Men from the more distant periods and ages felt that there was reserved some better thing. Since the birth of Christ, there is a capacity for new truth, new light.

III. *In life*—"In Him was yea." Our Joseph is yet alive. The gathering, accumulated sorrows and sins of the world brought him to it, incarnated Him in the fulness of time. Yet once again, the yearning cry of the world's painful consciousness shall, in the fulness of time, bring Him without sin in the Second Advent hour, when He shall come with clouds and every eye shall see Him.

E. PAXTON HOOD, *Dark Sayings*, p. 135.

REFERENCE: i. 19.—S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 219.

Chap. i., ver. 20 (R.V.).—"For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen."

GOD'S Certainties and Man's Certitudes.

I. Note first God's certainties in Christ. (1) There is the certainty about God's heart. The hopes and shadowy fore-

revelations of the loving heart of God are confirmed by the fact of Christ's life and death. (2) In Him we have the certainty of pardon. (3) Again, we have in Christ Divine certainties in regard to life. We have certainties for life in the matter of protection, guidance, supply of all necessity, and the like, treasured and garnered in Jesus Christ. (4) Lastly, in Christ we have the Divine certainties as to the future, over which, apart from Him, lie cloud and darkness.

II. Note, secondly, man's certitudes, which answer to God's certainties. The latter are *in* Christ, the former are *through* Christ. Now it is clear that the only fitting attitude for professing Christians in reference to these certainties of God is the attitude of unhesitating affirmation and joyful assent. Certitude is the fitting response to certainty. If we keep near Christ our faith will bring us the present experience and fulfilment of the promises, and we shall be sure of them, because we have them already.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 82.

REFERENCES: i. 20.—S. D. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 200; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 234; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 135; F. Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 235.

Chap. i., ver. 21.—**"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God."**

THE Anointing which Establishes.

I. Notice the deep source of Christian steadfastness. The language of the original, carefully considered, seems to me to bear this interpretation, that the "anointing" of the second clause is the means of the "establishing" of the first,—that is to say, that God confers Christian steadfastness of character by the bestowment of the unction of His Divine Spirit. No man will be surely bound to the truth and person of Christ with bonds that cannot be snapped except he who in his heart has the knowledge which is possession by the gift of that Divine Spirit to knit him to Jesus Christ.

II. In the next place, notice the aim or purpose of this Christian steadfastness. The words "in Christ" seem to me to imply (1) that our steadfastness, made possible by our possession of that Divine Spirit, is steadfastness in our relations to Jesus Christ; (2) that such steadfastness as we have been trying to describe has for its result a deeper penetration into Jesus Christ and a fuller possession of Him.

III. Notice the very humble and commonplace sphere in which the Christian steadfastness manifests itself. It was nothing

of more importance than that Paul had said he was going to Corinth, and did not, on which he brings all this array of great principles to bear. From which I gather just this thought, that the highest gifts of God's grace and the greatest truths of God's word are meant to regulate the tiniest things in our daily life.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 93.

Chap. i., ver. 22.—**"Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts."**

THE Seal of Earnest.

I. The first metaphor in the text, the "seal" of the Spirit. A seal is impressed upon a recipient material made soft by warmth, in order to leave there a copy of itself. The Spirit of God comes into our spirits, and by gentle contact impresses upon material, which was intractable until it was melted by the genial warmth of faith and love, the likeness of itself; but yet so as that prominences correspond to the hollows, and what is in relief in the one is sunk in the other.

II. Note the "earnest" which consists in like manner "of the Spirit." The "earnest," of course, is a small portion of purchase-money, or wages, or contract-money, which is given at the completion of the bargain as an assurance that the whole amount will be paid in due time. "And," says the Apostle, "this seal is also an earnest." It not only makes certain God's ownership and guarantees the security of those on whom it is impressed, but it also points onwards to the future, and at once guarantees that and to a certain extent reveals the nature of it. You have but to take the faith, the love, the obedience, the communion, of the highest moments of the Christian life on earth, and take from them all their limitations, subtract all their imperfections, and stretch them out to absolute eternity, and you get heaven. The earnest is of a piece with the inheritance.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 104.

Chap. i., ver. 24.—**"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy."**

MINISTERIAL Helpfulness.

This declaration divides itself very naturally into two parts—the negative and the positive; what is disclaimed, and what is professed; what the Apostle is not and will not, cannot be to them, and what he aspires to be and is.

I. First, then, observe with how much distinctness and de-

finiteness he repudiates and disclaims the position of supreme religious authority over them and their faith. If he, who was a chosen and well-adapted instrument for the full revelation of gospel truth to the Gentile world, in a particular instance like this in Corinth, when he has revealed it, draws back and seems to stand apart in serious and reverential contemplation of the stupendous problem that must be wrought out between the Saviour and the sinner, between God and the individual soul, how foolish and impious must it be for others so far inferior to him to make pretension to priestly power, to assert sacramental efficacy concerning what they do, to legislate and decide for others concerning those high and deep and far-reaching things comprised under the phrase "faith and morals."

II. "We are helpers of your joy." (1) In these times there is a great deal of intellectual hindrance to religious decision and life. While boastful cries are heard that the battle is lost, that our main positions are taken, and that we must immediately retire, we are seen keeping well in rank, and still advancing on the high field of conflict, and in the long battle of the ages, as looking for the victory in the fulness of time. And this cannot but have a reassuring effect upon those whose minds have been troubled. Thus in our very position and work, when they are honestly maintained, we become helpers of others' joy. (2) Then again, there is the continual shortcoming of the Christian life, making the helpfulness of the Christian ministry very necessary and very welcome. We are sent as repairers of all the breaches we may find, and restorers of the most desolate paths to dwell in. (3) Wherever we go we find sorrow and trouble in their various forms and measures. Christians only, and especially Christian teachers, are helpers of immortal joy—joy that will become glory everlasting in the great future world. (4) The grave is not the end of all—but to each there is a grave. To help the wearied soldier in fighting his last battle, the storm-tossed mariner into the haven of eternal rest and safety—this is to have harvest indeed. Triumphs won in life may be lost. Triumph won in death is something sealed and gained for ever. To help in this is to be a helper towards your eternal joy.

A. RALEIGH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 241.

REFERENCES: i. 24.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96; *Ibid.*, vol. iv., p. 154; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 274. ii. 6-11.—*Ibid.*, p. 280. ii. 10, 11.—C. J. Vaughan, *Words from the Cross*, p. 126; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 70.

Chap. ii., ver. 11.—"We are not ignorant of his devices."

I. SATAN endeavours to keep men from Christ, knowing well that the spiritual life will not thrive on anything but Christ; he endeavours to substitute anything else, no matter what, instead of Him, as an object for the soul to fix upon. And when this is done, the spiritual life becomes soon extinct, or wanes back into a miserable, spiritless formality. How many are checked and stunted in growth by this device of the enemy!

II. He blinds the judgment and spiritual understanding, and so produces a low and inadequate view of the Christian life, so that many of its most imperative requirements are kept in the background, while perhaps, at the same time, others are rigidly insisted on. It is a most important requisite for the Christian to be complete in his self-devotion to God.

III. He weakens our faith. The greatest blessing which any Christian can possess is a simple, unwavering faith in God. And no doubt this would be the direct consequence of the reception of the truth in the love of it, if not hindered and thwarted by the agency of Satan upon our sinful and doubting hearts.

IV. He suggests to the mind evil and hateful thoughts. Frequently such thoughts are thrust in against our wills, evidently not arising from any connection of ideas in our own minds; and this, to those who are given to low and desponding frames of feeling, is a sore trial, believing as they do that such thoughts arise from themselves, and that they betoken a depraved and criminal intention within them. If Christians would believe and recognise more than they do the agency of the tempter within them, they would derive encouragement under such inward struggles from knowing that it is not they themselves, but he against whom they are called on to maintain the good fight, from whom such thoughts arise. The conclusion from what has been said is twofold. (1) Of exhortation—"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (2) Of encouragement—It is surely a consolation to be able to see and know with whom we have to contend, to be able to feel that—evil as are our hearts by nature, and depraved as are our wills—*all* our inward temptations and suggestions to evil are not our own, and will not, if in God's strength resisted, be laid to our own charge.

H. ALFORD, *Sermons*, p. 301.

REFERENCES: ii. 12-17.—*Ibid.*, p. 287. ii. 14.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 259.

Chap. ii., vers. 14-16.

THE Absolute Character and Critical Effects of the Ministry of the Gospel.

I. The absolute or real character is seen in what it is to God. The gospel not only displays and embodies, but taxes to the utmost, the resources of the Divine love and wisdom combined. And just as the scattered flowers, fragrant shrubs, and sweet incense breathed forth a perfume of sweet savour before the advancing ranks of the triumphal procession, irrespective of its effects on victor and vanquished; so, irrespective of its consequences in respect to those who hear the gospel, the ministry of its glad tidings is unto God the diffusion of a sweet savour.

II. The critical influence of the gospel is seen in its opposite effects on those to whom it is preached. Paul felt acutely that he could not be the minister of the word of life to men without increasing their responsibility and aggravating the condemnation of those who rejected it. For in proportion to its quickening power of life in those who receive it, does it work death in those who refuse to accept it. The nature of fallen man being susceptible of the application of the divinest means for his recovery, he is, in case of their employment a failure, thereby doomed to a corresponding depth of wretchedness and woe. Let us learn that the character of the purpose of God's grace and the means for its fulfilment are such as to give Him joy wherever they are proclaimed. What they are to us is determined by our own moral state and character.

W. PULSFORD, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 198.

REFERENCE: ii. 14-17.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 194.

Chap. ii., vers. 15, 16.

GOD Glorified in the Preaching of the Gospel.

I. The gospel is a revelation of all which is most illustrious in Godhead and of all that as sinful creatures we are most concerned in ascertaining. We read that when God rested from the work of creation He saw everything that He had made, and He beheld that it was very good. And why should He not hold the same in regard to the gospel? It may well be supposed that God would regard the ambassadors of His Son, those who with their lives in their hands hastened to publish the glad tidings of redemption, as more truly and more emphatically the revealers of Himself, than all those worlds so gorgeously apparelled with

which His creative edict had peopled infinite space. Who then can be surprised at the lofty tone assumed by St. Paul when speaking of his own ministrations of the gospel of Christ. He felt that his preaching was a manifestation of the invisible Deity.

II. It was another view of the office of the preacher that extorted from the Apostle the words "Who is sufficient for these things?" Preachers are watchmen, and with all their vigilance may sometimes fail in warning those committed to their care. They are stewards of the mysteries of God; and compassed with infirmities even when they are unwearied in labour, they may occasionally err as interpreters of the word, and place before the people falsehood as well as truth. But it is when they come to view themselves as actually employed in the making men inexcusable, then it is that their office assumes its most fearful aspect. Then it is that, if they have but human hearts and sympathies, they must feel their office a burden too great to be borne, and half long to be allowed to keep back their message, lest it should prove nothing but a savour of death unto death. "Who is sufficient for these things?" It is for the hearers to spare their minister this, and to make the gospel a sweet savour of life unto life, and not a savour of death unto death.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2181.

References: ii. 15, 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 26; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 468.

Chap. ii., ver. 16.—"And who is sufficient for these things?"

The Missionary.

I. Among the qualifications of the true missionary, I do not scruple to put first a love of souls; or, if the expression be thought to have too technical a meaning, let us say rather an earnest longing that other men and women should become true Christians at heart. Here we have the true foundation on which all missionary success must be reared. There is no substitute for it. Heart to heart, soul to soul, man must come with his brother-man, if he is to implant in him any seeds of a spiritual life.

II. A successful missionary must be in the main a hopeful, sanguine man. One of the sorest temptations to missionaries is the temptation to despond. This is a temptation hardly known to any but noble natures. Those who have no high aims, no grand enterprises with which they have intertwined their hearts, cannot tell the miseries of misgiving. But the records of missionaries are essentially records of high aims and gallant enter-

prises; and so you find a large space filled by their hours of darkness. These are the weak moments of strong natures. They are enough to show one of the characteristic trials of the missionary, and of the need there is that he should be a man naturally cheerful and hopeful.

III. Again, a missionary should be a man of delicate sympathy. The most holy natures are sometimes deficient in at least the finer shades of sympathy. Such persons, if they adopt the missionary calling, will probably find again and again that their success is marred.

IV. A successful missionary must have a very sure and definite hold of the main promises and doctrines of the gospel. His own faith must be strong and simple; if not, he will not be able to speak or act with decision. His tongue will be tied, his arm will be palsied by the fatal consciousness that he has not thoroughly grasped and appropriated the truths which he is professing to impress upon others.

H. M. BUTLER, *Harrow Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 80.

I. THE difficulties which faced St. Paul were open and tangible. He knew that on one side there was Jewish bigotry, and on the other side Greek speculation; here the charge of apostasy from ancestral sanctities—there of insubordination to existing authorities; here some definite risk of scourging or stoning, of dungeon or sword—there some insidious corruption of gospel simplicity by Judaizing admixture or Alexandrian refinement. From these things he had no rest; his life was a daily sacrifice, wanting but its completion in the drink-offering of his blood. But St. Paul was spared some experiences, belonging to an age not his. That reckless, restless impatience of the old, even when the old is God's truth; that insolent disdain of Christ's ordinance of preaching; that choosing and rejecting amongst the plain sayings of Scripture,—these habits of thought and mind have taken the place, in our time, of that scoffing of the scorner which at least warned off the believing: they have passed inside the unguarded door of the Church, and they utter themselves in the very temple of God, as if they were part and parcel of the recognised sentiment of the faithful.

II. There is yet another peculiarity of our time which troubles a thoughtful man as much as any—it is the timidity of the believing, in the face of free thought and scientific discovery. I count it a great evil when true believers betray an uneasiness

in the presence of true seekers. Truth and the Truth can never really be at variance. Let not faith think that by hiding its head in the sand it can elude pursuit, or that by a clamorous outcry, "The gospel is in danger," it can breathe either confidence into its troops or panic into its foes. Let us be brave with a courage at once of man and of God. Let us count no affront to the cause of Christ equal to that of His so-called followers who would turn His Church into a clique and His hope into a fear.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Temple Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: ii. 16.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 385; J. Clifford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 305.

Chap. iii., vers. 1-5.

I. THERE is a peculiar writing on the tablet of the Christian's soul. The old covenant, with its precepts and penalties, was engraven upon slabs of stone; but the new covenant, with its gospel and its commandments, is written upon the sensitive and everlasting tablet of the heart.

II. The writing on the tablets of the true Christian's soul is effected for Christ by the Holy Spirit.

III. In writing upon the tablet of hearts, the Spirit of the living God employs men—pastors and teachers.

IV. Those upon whose hearts Christ has written are the epistles of Christ: they are Christ's chief means of communicating with the outlying world.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 125.

Chap. iii., ver. 2.—"Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

THE Two Ministrations—the Law and the Gospel.

I. There is perhaps something that, on the first mention, jars with our feelings in the fact that it was with a perfect knowledge that man could not obey the law, that the Almighty placed him under the law as a covenant. Yet in truth, there is no difficulty but what arises from the forgetfulness of union between the law and the gospel. If the two systems had been altogether detached, the law having no connection with the gospel, there would have existed great cause for wonder at God's having appointed a ministration of condemnation. But when it is remembered that the law was most strikingly introductory to the gospel, so that the covenant of works literally made way for the covenant of grace, all surprise ought to vanish, and all doubt to be removed,

as to the institution being consistent with love. From the earliest moment of human apostasy, God's dealing with the fallen had always a reference to the works of atonement; He looked upon the world as a redeemed world, at the very instant of its becoming rebellious.

II. The gospel is a ministration of righteousness. It is, therefore, far surpassing the law in its glory. It is a ministration of righteousness (1) because it is a system which, assuming that man can have no meritorious righteousness of his own, puts man in a position wherein he appropriates the meritorious righteousness of another. (2) Because it proposes to us the righteousness of the High Priest of our profession, as the procuring cause of our acceptance with God. And (3) this gospel, while displaying a perfect righteousness which hath been wrought out *for us*, insists peremptorily on a righteousness which must be wrought in us by God's Spirit, making our holiness, though it can obtain nothing by way of merit, indispensably necessary by way of preparation. If then the law, though a ministration of condemnation, be glory, does not the gospel, the ministration of righteousness, much more exceed in glory?

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1929.

REFERENCES: iii. 2.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 122; C. Morris, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. ii., p. 298. iii. 2, 3.—T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 215; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 229. iii. 3.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 84; A. J. Griffith, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 198. iii. 4, 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31. iii. 4-18.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 294. iii. 5.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. x., p. 277; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 88; W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 25.

Chap. iii., vers. 4, 5.—"And such trust have we through Christ to Godward: not that we are sufficient of ourselves, ... but our sufficiency is of God."

THE Divine Sufficiency.

I. Here we have a conception of the Christian ministry—what it is in its range, in its demands, in its difficulties, and in its trust upon God. The first work is unquestionably that of a preacher of the gospel. It is one message from heaven, a message of love; it is the message of an offended Father, still full of love to the children who have strayed from Him, and whom He would fain recover to Himself. The minister of the new covenant is God's messenger to teach men this. He is an ambassador—bound to speak to the utmost of his ability the

message which has been entrusted to him, having nothing to do with any other message but this.

II. If this be a correct view of the function of a minister of the gospel, what a very solemn work this work of preaching is! Men are to be led to believe. So that the idea is this, that the one power by which men are to be saved is preaching. We are so accustomed to the thought, we are so familiar with the remarkable power which in all ages has attended preaching, that it does not seem to us perhaps at first sight to be the marvel that it really is that men should be saved by the "foolishness of preaching." By that God means to save men. It is God's method. And what a responsibility must rest upon the preacher! Is it possible to think that preparation can be too careful, that the consecration of heart and mind can be too complete, that the culture of every faculty which God has given can be too perfect, in order that these faculties may be used to bring the force of the gospel to bear upon men's hearts?

III. It is not only, however, in relation to the work itself that the difficulties of the Christian teacher and pastor occur, but in regard to its results; for those results, however men may forget them and slight them, are of the most serious and momentous character. "To the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life." How could we bear these solemn responsibilities if it were not that "our sufficiency is of God."

J. GUINNESS ROGERS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 321.

Chap. iii., ver. 6.—"God hath made us able ministers [i.e., hath enabled us to be ministers] of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life."

PRACTICAL Use of the New Testament.

I. The New Testament is the revelation of eternal life by Christ; of life which must begin in man's spirit by the conviction of sin, must be entered on by justifying faith, and carried on by the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost. It comes to us, not as a code of laws, but as good news: this has ever been its name since its first announcement. And the good news have been of the most attractive kind. We find in the Gospels the independent testimonies of four holy and truthful men to a set of facts substantially the same. No concert had been previously entered into, to make them tally with one another; no collusion has taken place since their writing, by which seeming discrepancies might be removed. In some minor details, it cannot

be denied that their accounts are considerably divergent; in their consecutive order and arrangement of events, the same divergence is observed. How precious to us is all this, as matter of teaching, that we must not be children of the bondwoman, but of the free; that the same great Spirit, who worketh in every man severally as He will, worked according to this analogy in those holy men also.

II. The Gospels are usually taken up as a miscellaneous collection of histories, without any reference to their distinctive character. We should read them to obtain not only a correct historical idea of the important events which they record, but which is far more important, to be able to form in our own minds, and for our own spiritual lives, that living and consistent image of the glorious person of our Lord, which their separate testimonies, when combined, build up and complete.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 277.

Chap. iii., ver. 6.—"Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit."

I. AN able minister of the new testament, as many think, is a powerful, talented, and acceptable preacher of God's word, especially of the New Testament—one who is well acquainted with every part of the gospel, and well able to set it forth from the pulpit. There is nothing of the kind in the text. For "new testament" has no reference to that which *we* now call by that name: we know it cannot have, for the simple reason that the New Testament was not then written; some of the books of the New Testament were in existence, but more were not, nor had any one, in all probability, the slightest notion that there ever would be a volume such as we possess in the New Testament. In point of fact, the phrase "new testament" in our text means "new covenant"—that covenant, namely, which God made to men in Christ Jesus, in place of the older and now abolished covenant which He made to Israel by the hand of Moses. The contrast between the two is drawn out in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and in other places.

II. And in the second place, "ministers" has nothing at all to do with preachers: it simply means servants, or as we say "ministering servants"—such as are actively employed in carrying on the practical work of any dispensation or scheme; by a natural transition it comes to be specially applied to those who lend their active powers to the service of God and His Church

III. Lastly, *able* ministers was never meant to convey a

notion of cleverness or talent, or acceptableness in themselves. What St. Paul meant was, that God had made them able to be ministers and made it possible for them to act as ministers; but sufficiency, he says, is of God, who also enabled even us, utterly unworthy as we are, and, humanly speaking, quite inadequate, to be ministering servants of the new covenant made to man in Christ and ratified by His death.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 317.

Chap. iii., ver. 6.—"**The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.**"

RELIGIOUS Thought and Life of the Age.

I. There is in our age a tendency to greater simplicity of creed. The divines of to-day would hesitate to lay down, even on cardinal points, strict and narrow lines of orthodoxy; and still more would they shrink from including in any confession of faith a number of other dogmas, which, whether received or not, are not to be regarded as an essential part of the gospel. The feeling is strong, and it is continually growing, that the foundations of Christian fellowship are to be laid in spiritual sympathy rather than in theological agreement, and that all doctrinal formularies should be made as brief and as general as is consistent with the assertion of the grand principles of the Evangelical system.

II. The second tendency to be noted is that towards a truer and broader humanity in our system. I use what may seem the somewhat ambiguous term "humanity" to signify in general the disposition to recognise that a theological system must consider the aspect in which it presents God to man, as well as the coherence of its theory with the Divine government. The theology of the day does not pretend that the creature can have any claim on the Creator, but it sees what has too often been forgotten, that God must be true to Himself. Confessing the necessary limits to all human investigations, it yet feels that intellectual power has been given in vain, and that there can be no meaning in the gracious invitation of God Himself, "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord," if the gospel is not to be examined, and its teachings compared with those which God has given us through the conscience. The new tendency leads the preachers to deal with the false religions of the world as Paul dealt with the Athenians, when even their own errors and superstitions were used as stepping-stones up which they might be guided to the knowledge of the true God, and of Jesus Christ whom He had sent. In short, it deals with man as

the object of the Divine love after whom God is seeking, and it endeavours, by appeals to the intellect, conscience, and affection, to win him for Christ. What is this but carrying into practice the great principle of the Apostle, who recognises the power of adaptation and tells us that he himself employed it. "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

J. G. ROGERS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 129.

REFERENCES: iii. 6.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. iv., p. 161; J. Leckie, *Sermons at Ibrox*, p. 317; T. Lloyd, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 69; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, p. 395; vol. xxvi., p. 24; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 307; J. H. Hitchens, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 360; H. Riley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 185; R. Bartlett, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 187. iii. 6-11.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 30. iii. 7, 8.—*Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 173. iii. 7-11.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 421; 3rd series, vol. ii. p. 107; *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 121.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—"How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious?"

THE Ministry of the Spirit.

I. First among the proofs of Christianity comes the indisputable product of the "ministration of the Spirit," the new society of believers in Christ Jesus, the new world of redeemed and regenerate sons, created and held in its true spiritual orbit by the power of Christ, the Eternal Sun. The ministry of the Holy Ghost issues in a new social organism, which buries the hates of centuries out of sight, lifts purity to absolute supremacy, and makes the love of God and men the ruling passion of life and action.

II. The next most signal evidence of this ministry, in the first and nineteenth centuries alike, is the fulness and overflow of spiritual life consequent upon the descent and gracious indwelling of the Holy Ghost. The Christian society of the New Testament lives in habitual dependence upon an hourly communion with God. The same spirit is alive to-day.

III. We ought to expect the work of the Holy Spirit to be one of cleansing: an uplifting of the standard of sanctity, and an outflow of conquering holiness. So it was, and so it is.

IV. The first century was the era of universal missionary enterprise. This too is the missionary day the God of all souls has made, and in it we will rejoice and be glad.

V. But one of the most assured evidences of the teaching ministry of the Spirit is the simplification of the problem of

religion and the opening up of the treasures of revelation to all men.

VI. Whence comes the rousing of our solicitudes for the social welfare of our fellows, and of the quickening of interest in all measures of social reform? Whence but from that Spirit whose gracious ministration lifted the slave to a seat by the side of his Master at the supper of love?

VII. Add to and penetrate all this work with the life-giving presence of an immortal hope, and you have carried the service of the Spirit to the maximum of effectiveness. Christianity is the rebirth of hope. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed."

J. CLIFFORD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 296.

REFERENCES: iii. 9.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 203. iii. 12.—J. B Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 46. iii. 12, 13.—L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 1.

Chap. iii., vers. 12-18.

MIRRORS of Christ.

I. Note first what St. Paul means when he speaks of why Moses put the veil upon his face. You think it was because it was too bright that he did so. Not at all. When his face is shining with most radiance, then it is that he bares it before the assembled multitude. They dread to come near him, but they are persuaded to draw nigh, and with his face shining with the glory that it got from God, he talks to the people; when he has done speaking, he hides his face until he goes in again to speak to the Holy One of Israel; then he takes the veil off, and then it gathers fresh glory, and with this fresh glory he comes out and speaks again to the people. Moses, in his wisdom, judged it well to hide his face in between. The light began to grow shadowy and fade, until he went in again to speak to God. Where the Spirit of the Lord is not, there is slavery at all times, dulness and darkness and stupidity; people must often be left in that condition, just like the old Jews, because they would not make use of it if more was given.

II. As the picture of the sun dwells in the mirror, so the form of Jesus Christ, the idea of Him as we behold Him with unveiled face, dwells in us, as a power, as an indwelling force. The idea that you have drawn from seeing Christ, that is the mirror-form of Christ in your soul, and that is the Spirit dwelling in you and working in you in proportion as you have Him right and hold Him true. Give your souls to the Living One, and He will make them glorious. Let the love of God shine into your hearts and

obey it, and then there is no limit to the eternal height to which you should rise, to the eternal breadth to which your souls should go up; nay, there is no limit to the depth into which your souls will be able to pierce the very Divine will of God, which is the universe, which is the life, which is the treasure of all existence.

G. MACDONALD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 33.

REFERENCES: iii. 12-18.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 46. iii. 14, 15.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 157. iii. 15.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 281; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253. iii. 15, 16.—E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 284.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—**"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."**

SPIRITUAL Liberty.

These words form the climax of the argument contained in the whole of the chapter. Through the chapter Paul puts law and gospel side by side. He shows us that there was a glory attached to the legal dispensation, but that the glory of the gospel far exceeds it in many respects. He notes first that it transcends the law in glory, in that the literal knowledge of the law, as engraven on stone, had no power whatever to affect the heart of the man who read it. The tables of stone had no quickening power in them, but when the law gives place to the gospel, no one can receive it without having wrought, at once, an inward transformation. (2) The Apostle goes further in the seventh verse, for he shows the superiority of the gospel over the law in that, whilst the law was simply a ministry of condemnation, the gospel is a ministry of life. (3) He proceeds a step further, and shows that the gospel has an exceeding glory over the law, in that, while the latter was only temporary, the gospel is for ever. (4) And yet once more the gospel exceeds the law in the matter of its perspicuity. The law was obscure, and the revelation made to man through Moses was dim and indistinct. "Now," says the Apostle, "there is an efficiency in the gospel which the law does not possess. The law found man in bondage, and left him so, only sealing the cords of his captivity; but when the gospel comes it snaps all fetters and leads the man at once into perfect liberty, for where the Spirit of the Lord is—that is, where the gospel of Christ is—where the law of the Spirit of life is—there is liberty. Freedom follows the footsteps of the gospel.

I. This is true among the nations of the earth. Although the liberty mentioned here does not primarily refer to political,

or religious, or national liberty, yet, at the same time, national liberty is the inseparable companion of the gospel. Wherever the gospel of the grace of God has free way—is preached and accepted—there you always find political liberty following in its wake. Liberty is the attendant angel of the gospel. Let God's truth lay hold of any land, and despotism dies. The gospel creates an atmosphere that suffocates a despot; and where it is free it exercises an influence under which slavery of every description is certain to wither.

II. Our text is true in regard to ecclesiasticism. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Once have the gospel in the heart, and there is a grand rebellion against all the despotism of ecclesiasticism.

III. Our text is specially true in the experience of the individual believer. There is liberty (1) from the bondage of sin, (2) from the entanglements of ceremonialism, (3) liberty of character, (4) liberty in service, (5) liberty in all that the Bible contains.

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 974.

I. I DO not find, anywhere in the Bible, that we are warned against too much liberty. In fact, it is almost always those who have felt themselves too shut up and confined, who break out into carelessness of conduct; just as the stopped river, bursting its barrier, runs into the more violent stream. And yet some people seem to me to be afraid of a free gospel. The freeman of the Lord walks in the day. His former sins do not trouble him. They were cancelled the first time he brought them to Christ, and God never rewrites one cancelled line. He has to do with nothing but the sins of the day.

II. The Christian has the commandment of God in his mind, and it is his delight to study and to keep it. But far more than the command, he has the whole will of God. He has studied the commands till he has reached to the spirit of the commands. He has gathered the mind of God. He knows, by a kind of blessed, spiritual intuition, what the will of God would be on any given subject, and he follows it. It is a very grand feeling to be doing God's will. This is what Christ was doing all the time He was on earth. It is the Spirit of the Lord, and "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

III. Is not the Christian free of the New Jerusalem? And how should things on the surface of this little world bind him? He is on the wing for eternity. These things cannot hold him. He can go down into deep, secret places. His mind is dealing

with the mind of eternity. He is free to all the promises of the Lord, for he has the mind of Christ.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 61.

REFERENCES: iii. 17.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. i., No. 9; *Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 633, 634; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 467; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 149; J. E. C. Welldon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 392; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 124.

Chap. iii., ver. 18.—"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

THE Intuition of Faith.

St. Paul says that we, as members of Christ, behold the manifold glory of God as in a glass, as if it were a direct object of sight, and that by beholding it we are changed. It has an assimilating power, and that which makes us capable of its transforming influence is our beholding it "with open face." What, then, is this power of vision, this spiritual sight by which the unseen is visible; in one word, what is faith? It is the power which the Son of God gives us to behold the glory of the Lord. But we are asked, What is this power, this faith which is given us?

I. The controversies of these later ages have committed two evils; they have dethroned the object of faith, and they have degraded faith itself. Faith is something more Divine than disputants believe. Some will have it to be a speculative assent to truths revealed, and some, to correct them, will have it to be a principle of moral action, and others, to set both sides right, join together these two definitions in one, and tell us that faith is a principle of moral action springing out of a speculative assent to truths revealed. As if faith were something partial and fragmentary, the action of half our being; an effect without a cause, or with a cause simply human, and within the natural endowments of the human intelligence. Surely all these alike, if not equally, come short of truth. We might as well say that sight is a belief of things seen, or that sight is action arising out of a belief in what we see. What are these but the effects of sight demanding and pointing to a cause? They are the consequences of sight, not sight itself. As our waking sense checks our irregular thoughts and subjects us to the conditions of the world we see, so faith brings the whole spiritual nature of man under the dominion and laws of the unseen kingdom of God. This supernatural gift was infused into us as a habit by the Spirit of God, but in its acting it depends upon our will.

II. A clear intuition is the very life of the consciousness of God and of His kingdom. And this clear intuition of the heart is to be attained only by habitual self-examination and penitent confession made under the eyes in which the heavens are unclean. The next condition essential to beholding the glory of the Lord is a habitual use of spiritual exercises, such as meditation and prayer, whether mental or in words, and the like. By spiritual exercise is meant specially, an exercise of the will awakening the consciousness of our spiritual life. The whole catholic faith, the worship of the Church, the discipline of spiritual life through devotions and sacraments, has no existence for us, until we have united our spiritual consciousness with them by acts of faith and of the will. And the last and highest means of perfecting the gift of faith is to exercise it habitually upon the real presence of our blessed Lord in the Sacrament of His body and of His blood. For this very end it was ordained, that when He should withdraw His visible presence, He might still abide with us unseen; that when He ceased to be an object of sight, He might become an object of faith; and that the spiritual consciousness of our hearts should there for ever meet with the reality of His presence.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 369.

TRANSFORMATION by Beholding.

I. The Christian life is a life of contemplating and reflecting Christ. Note (1) Paul's emphasis on the universality of the vision—"*We all.*" (2) This contemplation involves reflection, or giving forth the light which we behold.

II. This life of contemplation is a life of gradual transformation. The brightness on the face of Moses was only skin-deep. It faded away and left no trace. It effaced none of the marks of sorrow and care, and changed none of the lines of the strong, stern face. But, says Paul, the glory which we behold sinks inward, and changes us, as we look, into its own image. Thus the superficial lustre, that had neither permanence nor transforming power, becomes an illustration of the powerlessness of law to change the moral character into the likeness of the fair ideal which it sets forth. And in opposition to its weakness, the Apostle proclaims the great principle of Christian progress, that the beholding of Christ leads to the assimilation to Him.

III. The life of contemplation finally becomes a life of complete assimilation. Christ's true image is that we should feel as He does, should think as He does, should will as He does; that

we should have the same sympathies, the same loves, the same attitude towards God and the same attitude towards men. The whole nature must be transformed and made like Christ's, and the process will not stop till that be accomplished in all who love Him. But the beginning here is the main thing, which draws all the rest after it as of course.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 77.

THE Gift of the Spirit.

I. Some insight is given into the force of the word "glory" as our present privilege, by considering the meaning of the title "kingdom of heaven," which has also belonged to the Church since Christ came. The Church is called by this name as being the court and domain of Almighty God, who retreated from the earth, as far as His kingly presence was concerned, when man fell. Not that He left Himself without witness in any age; but even in His most gracious manifestations, still He conducted Himself as if in an enemy's country, "as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night." But when Christ had reconciled Himself to His fallen creatures, He returned according to the prophecy "I will dwell in them and walk in them; I will set My sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore." From that time there has really been a heaven upon earth, in fulfilment of Jacob's vision. Since the Christian Church is a heaven upon earth, it is not surprising that in some sense or other its distinguishing privilege or gift should be glory, for this is the one attribute which we ever attach to our notion of heaven itself, according to the Scripture intimations concerning it. The glory here may be conceived of by considering what we believe of the glory hereafter.

II. Next, if we consider the variety and dignity of the gifts ministered by the Spirit, we shall perhaps discern in a measure why our state under the gospel is called a state of glory. The Holy Ghost has taken up His abode in the Church in a variety of gifts, as a sevenfold Spirit. The gift is denoted in Scripture by the vague and mysterious term "glory," and all the descriptions we can give of it can only, and should only, run out into a mystery.

III. It were well if these views were more understood and received among us. They would, under God's blessing, put a stop to much of the enthusiasm which prevails on all sides, while they might tend to dispel the cold and ordinary notions of religion which are the opposite extreme. For ourselves, in proportion as we realise the higher view of the subject, which we

may humbly trust is the true one, let us be careful to act up to it. Let us adore the sacred presence within us with all fear, and rejoice with trembling. Prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, good works and alms deeds, a bold and true confession and a self-denying walk, are the ritual of worship by which we serve Him in these His temples. As we persevere in them the inward light grows brighter and brighter, and God manifests Himself to us in a way that the world knows not of. In this, then, consists our whole duty, first in contemplating Almighty God, as in heaven, so in our hearts and souls; and next, while we contemplate Him, in acting towards and for Him in the works of every day; in viewing by faith His glory without and within us, and in acknowledging it by our obedience. Thus we shall unite conceptions the most lofty concerning His majesty and bounty towards us, with the most lowly, minute, and unostentatious service to men.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 254.

I. *The Picture.* "We all with open face beholding as in a glass *the glory of the Lord.*" The glory of God in Christ, or the excellence and beauty of the Divine nature and purpose as they are revealed in the gospel—that is the picture on which we are invited to gaze. Jesus Christ is the brightness of God's glory. He honours law and expresses love. His death is the centre of universal harmony. His resurrection is victory over hell and death. His ascension opens immortality and heaven. His Second Coming is the hope, as it will be the joy and triumph, of every loving heart.

II. *The Beholders.* We are all beholding. "We," Christians, that is. The whole context requires this interpretation. There is a sense, no doubt, in which it may be said, that all who have heard of the Lord Jesus Christ, so as to have anything like correct views of His person and character, are beholders of God's glory in Him. All Christendom, in this sense, stands beholding. Even heathen lands are turning to gaze. Light from the great picture streams over Christendom, penetrates the darkness of heathendom, and men cannot but look towards a vision so bright and beautiful. But it is the doctrine of this, and many other passages in the New Testament, that a new sense is needed, what may be called a new soul-sense, by which to apprehend and appreciate spiritual things.

III. *The Transformation.* We are changed into the same image, changed as we gaze. We gaze and become like that which we

behold, like Him whom we love. The spiritual apprehension we have, the vivid appreciative faculty within us, transfers to us and fixes upon our souls the beauty we behold. This is a truth acknowledged by philosophy and everywhere recognised in the word of God. By perceiving we become. By knowledge, spiritual, apprehensive knowledge, we grow in grace.

IV. The author and finisher of this transformation is the blessed Spirit of God—"Even as by the Spirit of the Lord." He reveals the picture, He clarifies the eye, He vitalises the spiritual law, and He dwells in the soul. He changes and watches the great work from birth to perfection. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto us. He leads us out of all our darkness into the realm of gospel light and glory, where we are transfigured as we stand.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 123.

REFERENCES: iii. 18.—*Good Words*, vol. iii., pp. 636, 639; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 217; J. Clifford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 121; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines of Sermons*, p. 392; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 94; E. Paxton Hood, *Sermons*, p. 356. iv. 1.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 242; Ray, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 17. iv. 1-15.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 301.

Chap. iv., ver. 2.—"By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

THE Self-Evidencing Nature of Divine Truth.

I. (1) By the statement that the truths of revelation commend themselves to the conscience or consciousness of man, it is not implied that man, by the unaided exercise of his consciousness, could have discovered them. The power to recognise truth, when presented to us, does not by any means imply the power to find out or originate the same truth. (2) Again, in averring that the truths of revelation commend themselves to the conscience or consciousness of man, not only do we not ascribe to the consciousness a power to discover those truths, but we do not even imply that the consciousness in its unrenewed and imperfect state is qualified fully to recognise and verify them when discovered to it. Divine truth exerts on the mind a restorative and self-manifesting power. It creates in the mind the capacity by which it is discerned. As light opens the close-shut flower-bud to receive light, or as the sunbeam, playing on a sleeper's eyes, by its gentle irritation opens them to see its own brightness, so

the truth of God, shining on the soul, quickens and stirs into activity the faculty by which the very truth is perceived.

II. In what way may we conceive of Divine truth as commending itself to the consciousness of man? It does so (1) by revealing to man the lost ideal of his nature; (2) by discovering to him the mode of regaining it. The great obstacles to the soul's recovery of its lost ideal are obviously these two—the sense of guilt and the consciousness of moral weakness—and the two great needs, therefore, of every awakened mind are the need of Forgiveness and the need of Moral Strength. And it is in meeting and supplying these wants that the truth as it is in Jesus commends itself most profoundly to the consciousness of man.

J. CAIRD, *Sermons*, p. 1.

CONSCIENCE a Witness to the Truth.

I. Both the promises and threatenings of the Bible may be handled deceitfully. It should be in the hope and with the design of obtaining a willing hearing for the gracious proffers of forgiveness and reconciliation, that the preacher portrays the fearful things of vengeance, and shows the hosts of the disobedient overtaken and overwhelmed by the just anger of God. If we use the law as a schoolmaster, it should be specifically with the purpose of bringing men to Christ; and the preacher who should leave his hearers appalled by his representations of a coming day of vengeance, and not strive to take advantage of their fears in order to induce them to seek a place of refuge, would be acting in forgetfulness of the first duty of the Christian preacher, and deserve all that could be said as to the handling God's word deceitfully: deceitfully, just as though the word were given to furnish figures which might move awfully and mysteriously to and fro on a darkened stage, in place of the display of a cross, on which He who hangs gives utterance to the cheering words, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth."

II. There is a manifestation of truth to the conscience, when perhaps it is not acted on, nor even encouraged. There is something very expressive in the words "in the sight of God." St. Paul was satisfied that the doctrines which he preached and the motives by which he was actuated, were equally such as approved themselves to God. He had no hesitation as to this, that whatever the opposition and misrepresentation which he met with from men, he could appeal to Him who searcheth the heart, secure of being accounted a faithful minister of Christ.

It was a noble thing thus to be able to speak of commending himself to the conscience of his hearers in the sight of God. This assurance of the approval of his Master in heaven must have been more to the Apostle than the applause of the world, and might well compensate for its frown and its scorn.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1674.

REFERENCES: iv. 2.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 225; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 91; Archbishop Magee, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 249; G. T. Perks, *Catholic Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 121; C. G. Finney, *Gospel Themes*, p. 231. iv. 3.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 339.

Chap. iv., vers. 3, 4.—"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost," etc.

THE Gospel the Manifestation of God.

I. St. Paul speaks of the gospel or good news being hid from those to whom it was proclaimed. St. Paul is not declaring what may be the consequences of rejecting the gospel, but what was the cause of its rejection. He is explaining a fact that was happening continually before his eyes. When he found the Gentiles given up to sensuality, he called them lost. Their minds, he said, were darkened; they were alienated from the mind of God in consequence of the ignorance that was in them, in consequence of the hardening of the heart. When St. Paul found the Jews shut up in self-righteousness and self-glorification, exulting in the law, exulting in their difference from all other men, he called them lost. There was the same blindness, the same hardness of heart, as in the other case. He knew that there was, for he had felt it; he had been lost.

II. Then follows an explanation, drawn from his own experience, of the darkening of the heart which he has been describing in these two apparently different cases. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not." Could he have uttered a more pregnant truth? A god of this world lay beneath all the superstitions of the nations; ready to develop himself whenever the belief in some higher and better Being, which lived on amidst all confusions in their consciences, should be utterly crushed under the moral corruptions against which it protested.

III. If we understand who it was that was blinding the minds of those who did not believe, we shall understand better what it was that St. Paul wished them to believe—what the purpose of his gospel was, what the effect was upon those whose

blindness it overcame. This is expressed in the last clause, "Lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Here was the subject of the good tidings: they were tidings concerning God. They set forth the true God, the living God, in opposition to the false god, the dead god, the god of this world, who was blinding the minds of Jews as well as of Gentiles. But this true God, this living God, could not be declared to one or to the other in any words of St. Paul or of any man. He could only be presented in a person; there must be a living image of Him; He could only be seen in the life and death of a man. What St. Paul had to do was to proclaim that God had shown forth such an image of Himself in the world, that it would confound all images which men had made of Him out of nature or out of themselves. Therefore the Apostle was to say, "This good news is none of mine. I have no power to make you entertain it or accept it. My rhetoric, my vehemence, cannot effect a passage for it into your souls. If it could, what would it profit you? The message is concerning a Person: you are called to submit to a living Ruler; you are called to embrace a living Friend. How can a whole heap of words, suppose you took them in ever so readily and liked them ever so much, work in you this obedience, bestow on you this fellowship? God is doing that, not we. He is manifesting His Son in you. His light is shining about you, and seeking to enter into those hearts which must just as much take it in as the eyes the light of the sun. Another god—the god of this world—is using all arts to intercept this light, to draw a veil between you and it, to put out the organ which should transmit it to you. What I would have you believe is that Christ's light is stronger than the darkness and can break through it all."

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 117.

REFERENCES: iv. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1663; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 549. iv. 4.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 97; vol. iii., p. 27; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 2.

Chap. iv., ver. 5.—"Ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

I. THE Church is the union of believers, outwardly manifested by the sacraments, but having its essence in the personal union of each believer's soul with Christ. I see the gates of the New Testament open outward. That life which had been taking shape within the little world which the New Testament enclosed, goes forth so quietly, so simply, to meet the larger life of the

world. It is Peter coming down from the housetop to go to Cornelius at Cæsarea. It is Paul crossing over from Troas into Macedonia. I see the history that has come since. And all bears testimony to the naturalness of the New Testament process by the way in which it has possessed the world. This Jesus must be a true Lord of men.

II. The Church exists before the ministry. There are disciples first, and their discipleship lies behind their apostleship to the end. There is only one place for the ministry to hold. If it is not the master, it must be the servant of the Church. If it is not set to rule, it must rejoice to obey; to know the Church to be greater than it, and not its creature; to accept it as its highest duty to help the Church to realise itself, and to grow into the full power of the Divine Life of which it, through the relation between Christ and the souls of its individual members, is perpetually the recipient. Ruler or servant, which shall it be? Strange how from the first the very name by which the successors of the apostles have been called has seemed to answer the question for itself. They have been ministers, and *ministers* mean *servants*. Strange that, with words like those of the text written in the very forefront of its shining history, the Church should have so loved the other notion of the rulership of the clergy, the dominion of the priest; and monarchies, splendid with pomp, or subtle with intrigue, but always bad with tyranny, should have so filled the story of the Christian ages.

III. There are three possible calls to every minister,—the call of God, the call of his own nature, and the call of needy men. May not one almost say that no man has a right to think himself a minister who does not hear all three vocations blending into one and marking out his path to walk in past all doubt? And these three come in perfect union in the soul of him who hears the Father call one of His children to serve the rest in those great necessities which belong to them all. The Church of the millennial days shall be nothing less, nothing else than a regenerated and complete humanity. There all shall be ministers, for all shall be servants; all shall be people, for all shall be served. In these imperfect days, let us watch and wait for those days of perfectness. Let us do all we can to help their coming. Let us count no condition final till they come. Let us live in, and live for, and never despair of, the ever-advancing, ever-enlarging Church of Christ.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Light of the World*, p. 199.

I. THE subject-matter of the Apostle's ministry was Christ Jesus the Lord. Wherever he went he preached nothing else but Christ. It was always one and the same gospel. He (1) preached Jesus as the Messiah whom the Jews were taught to expect; and also as the desire of all nations. He showed how His atonement was a sacrifice for sin. (2) He preached Him as the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church. (3) He preached Him in the dignity of His person, not only as man, but God. (4) He preached Him in the grandeur of His miracles. (5) He preached Him in His wondrous atonement. (6) He preached Christ Jesus in all the purity and power of His righteousness. (7) He preached Him as the Lord of the conscience. We preach Him then as Lord in every sense of the term, in the highest sense, in the most extreme sense—the Lord over the body as well as the soul; the Lord over our conscience, over our property, of our hopes, of our love and desires; the Lord of our future, and the Lord of our confidence here; our Lord in times of prosperity and in times of trial, in times of joy, in the dying moment, at the day of judgment, and in the endless ages of eternity; our Lord for ever and ever. We preach Jesus Christ the Lord.

II. The manner or mode of the preaching of Paul. It was one of the most remarkable features of the apostolical ministry that the Apostles really exercised self-denial. They thought not of themselves but of their Master. Paul preached himself as the servant of the Church. The minister of religion should give to the Church, first of all, the entire use of his time. There are a variety of ways in which a man may preach himself. He may preach to show his learning, or for pecuniary advantage, or to exercise authority over men, to head a party. A minister should give to his church all his ability, and also be with his people in times of trial and especially in times of affliction, and his great motive of action must be love to Christ, and "for Jesus' sake."

H. ALLON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3252.

CHRIST as Lord.

What is the substance of the message which a Christian preacher has to bring? "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord."

I. First of all, we preach the Divine personality in Christ. Man's great need, after all, is to see God. Life can yield only limited pleasures, and we wait for a sight of the great continent of eternity. All biblical history is a series of pathways leading

through the tangled perplexities of man's ignorance back to God. Christ may remain unknown as God to many, but that does not alter His Divinity. Still He is Divine. When the sons of Jacob first went to Egypt they received corn and kindness at the hand of Joseph, but they did not know Joseph to be the son of Jacob, their father. So our systems of thought and our best activities are filled with Christ's spirit to-day as the sacks were filled with corn, and men do not know how Divine is the hand that gives them all things. But then comes a day of revelation. Just as Joseph was made known to his brethren, so Jesus is made known to His Church. Love is the great revealer: Jesus is known to His people; God is manifest in the flesh.

II. We preach the Divine propitiation through Christ. "Mercy" is a very humbling word, a very crushing word to our proud minds and hearts. Yet, when conscience is awake and conviction has been brought home to us that we are guilty, it is the one word out of God's rich vocabulary that we most of all need. We preach Christ Jesus as Lord.

III. We preach the Divine sovereignty in Christ. Christ is Saviour in order that He may be King. He saves us first, because it is the only effective way of ruling over us. It is love that rules and love that changes. When St. Peter's was built at Rome, its soaring vastness and overtowering greatness and grandeur seemed man's homage to Christ's greatness; and on the granite obelisk opposite St. Peter's was written in Latin: "Christ conquers; Christ rules; Christ is Emperor; Christ delivers His people from every evil." It was a worthy sentence, but that it may be realised and fulfilled it must be approved by every heart and must be written in the history of every sanctuary.

S. PEARSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 360.

REFERENCES: iv. 5.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 73; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 376; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 32; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 321; Harris, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 13. iv. 5, 6.—S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 94.

Chap. iv., ver. 6.—"The face of Jesus Christ."

I SUPPOSE each one has his own ideal Christ. As you think of Him He appears with the face your imagination loves to give Him. If we do not know much about the actual outline of His face, there are many things that we do know concerning it, and I want to turn a few lights of Scripture on the lovely face of Jesus Christ. Let us see what is said about His countenance.

I. I observe, first, that the face of Jesus was a sad face. Think of the sorrow, care, grief, fastings, watchings, anxieties, which this Man of Nazareth had. Do you think that any man could be, as He was, a man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance, and not bear some marks of it upon his face? His countenance became so careworn and haggard that He looked twenty years older than He was; for when but thirty, the Jews, guessing His age, said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old." Look into those sad eyes of His, and when you have had a little communion with the Man of sorrows and grief's acquaintance, I believe you will drink in an inspiration to bear your trials which you never had before.

II. The face of Jesus Christ was a face full of purpose and indicative of force of character. "He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." Go and see Christ just before that baptism of His into sorrow and suffering, and go forward to bear your cares and sorrows aright; and when you look into that face so steadfastly set to go towards Jerusalem, ask God to give you also an unswerving spirit in treading the path of Divine direction.

III. The face of Jesus Christ was an outraged face.

IV. It was a face shrouded in death.

V. It was a glorified face. It shineth like the sun now.

VI. It is the terror of the ungodly.

VII. It is a face that may be sought. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 828.

Chap. iv., ver. 6.—"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

THE Light of the Heart.

I. The first and simplest truth involved in the text is the universality of the grace of God in Christ—at least, its capability of application to all mankind. This is implied in the unlimited range of influence attributed to the Divine light, as shining not on a chosen few, *e.g.*, on the Apostles themselves, but on all whom St. Paul addressed, uniting his brethren with himself in a community of participation of the same grace, the same light shining on *our* hearts; and also in the imagery employed, the light of the day being a universal gift, shed without limit for the common benefit of all creatures. Thus the light of Christ hath shined without respect of persons on our common humanity.

II. Moreover the text touches upon the momentous difference permitted between the elect of the past and those of the present dispensation of God; the marked distinction in the relation in which Israel stood towards Him and that which we occupy. In the Epistles there is expressed no such cry as that which continually rose out of the heart of old Israel. On the contrary, the most restful spirit, though in the midst of sorest trials, marks the language of the Apostles, and their ground of rest lies in the inherent consciousness of God.

III. The light shining in our hearts is not merely the manifestation of the truth or the possession of an idea. It is the light of the glory of God in the *Face* of Jesus Christ which has shined in our hearts.

IV. It requires to be carefully noted that there is a momentous difference between the inward shining of God in the heart and the heart's own embracing of this perfect light. We may be all alike in regard to the one, but infinitely differing in regard to the other.

V. Again, we see here the basis on which a true human fellowship is formed. Our feelings towards our fellow-creatures are true, if we view them in the light which the Incarnation has shed on our redeemed nature. Natural love, when combined with this new bond of union with God, becomes the deepest rest and satisfaction of the heart's language towards God; and spiritual ties may become as close, as tender, as full of sympathy, of rest and trustful communion, as the fondest ties of nature, through the unction of the Holy One uniting heart with heart in the circle of Divine love which is shed abroad upon the creature in his transformation in Christ.

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 359.

THE Gospel of the Face.

Consider if there is not a gospel of the face, an all-transcending fact-form, life-form gospel made out for us, which it behoves us always to live in, and have always living in us; for the most living form of the doctrine is that, of course, which as our human nature works will have the most immediate and divinest power.

I. Let us look into the New Testament, and distinguish, if we can, what is called preaching there. And we find our Apostle testifying, "*Whom* we preach—that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." He does not say *about* whom, or the just account and formula of whom, but *whom*: the fact-form Man, the life and life-history and feeling and sorrow and death and resurrection of the Man. The souls to be gained are to be

presented perfect in Christ Jesus; that is, in the new possibilities and powers of grace embodied for them in the face and person, or personal life, of their incarnate Redeemer.

II. What importance there is in a revelation or presentation of God, which enters Him into the world as He can be entered in no form of abstraction. The very purpose of incarnation is to get by or away from abstractions, and give the world a concrete personation. Thus in Christ's living person, we are to have God, who is above all history, entered into history, and by such human ways of life as history takes note of, becoming incorporate with it.

III. If there is to be any remedy for the precise disability and woe of sin, it must be such as may, in some way, restore God to His place in the soul. Re-inspiration is our first want, for not even the Holy Spirit re-inspires, save as He shows the things of Christ objectively without. God is to look Himself in again from the face of Jesus; but what is nowise different, Jesus dying into our dead sympathies, is to enter back the Divine and quicken us to life.

IV. It is a consideration having great weight, that no other kind of doctrine but that which adheres to the concrete, matter-of-fact gospel makes a true, or any but a false point for faith. Salvation, we say, is by faith, and what is faith? The faith that brings salvation is the act of a being towards a being, sinner to Saviour, man to God. "He that believeth in *Me*," says Christ—not he that believeth some things or many things about Me. It is the act of an undone, lost man, giving himself over in trust to Jesus Christ, person to person; a total consenting to Christ, to be of Him and with Him and for Him, to let Him heal and renovate and govern, and be made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption—in one word, everything.

V. It is a fact to be carefully noted, that all the best saints and most impressive teachers of Christ are those who have found how to present Him best in the dramatic forms of His personal history. Such were Chrysostom, Augustine, Luther, Tauler, Wesley. These great souls could not be shut up under the opinional way of doctrine, or even under their own opinions. Their gospel was not dry and thin and small in quantity. They had a wonderful outspreading of life and volume, because they breathed so freely the supernatural inspiration of Christ, and let their inspiration forth in such grand liberties of utterance. H. BUSHNELL, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 73.

I. God commanded the light to shine out of darkness. To this, after all, we must come. When we have discovered the properties of any natural agent, and pass from inquiring what it is to inquire *why* it is, we have no answer left but the will of the Almighty Creator. He willed it, and so it was, or as His word expresses it in condescension to our human ways, He spake it, and it was. Such is the Divine character. God is not the author of confusion, not the abettor of obscurity and concealment, not the enemy of life and progress; but the God of order and peace, the God of revelation and of knowledge, the Friend of all that was made and of its highest advance to life and happiness. In the text a spiritual act of God is spoken of analogous to the creation of light in the outward world. That He who is light and the Father of light, who is the author of that which reveals and cheers the physical world, should also create the light of the intellectual and spiritual world, appears to follow as a matter of course from any consistent idea of His power and of His providence.

II. The beginning of the work of grace is the first lighting of the candle of the Lord in the heart. It is totally unlike any mere inference of the reason, or anything which can be gained by information from without. It is gentle, gradual, but none the less a certainty. The spiritual day is as real as the natural day. There are those who are blind to the daylight of this earth. But the day is none the less real for their ignorance of it. The wide world lives in its beams and walks in its light. And there are those who are blind to the light of which we treat; who never saw its rays, and though they speak of it as others do, are wholly unconscious of the reality. But it is none the less real for them. The great multitude which no man can number, the Church and people of God, live by its beams and walk in its light. H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. i., p. 84.

References: iv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1493; *Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 351; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 95; E. Paxton Hood, *Sermons*, p. 101. iv. 7.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 287; J. C. Harrison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 219; H. Moore, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 283. iv. 8.—C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, pp. 475, 490.

Chap. iv., vers. 8, 9.—"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in d spair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed."

The Broken Life.

The mystery of evil has many aspects. There is one which

is contained in that sad word, waste. How much that was born with each one of us must pass unused and undeveloped into the grave! Who is there that has begun to think, and has passed the entrance on actual life, what man of thirty, what woman of five-and-twenty, has not already learned to relinquish what had once seemed possible.

I. The vision of life in early youth, for those who think and feel, has a unity and completeness, as of the body of heaven in his clearness. Whether the aim of aspiration be the triumph of a single power, or the varied exercise of many, there is a flawless completeness in it, a rounded perfection, which those who have travelled further cannot but envy, if they retain enough of sympathy to perceive it. But we all find out at some point in our course that feeling and energy must be adapted to circumstances; that while desires and aims may be boundless, opportunity and time and human power are limited; that after all false starts and mistaken efforts, we have still a work to do, a place to fill, a line of action which experience points out to us as our duty.

II. And it is here that the difference becomes apparent between the true and false resolution of enthusiasm, which has attempted the impossible. The possible remains. But does there remain in us the strength and will to do it? While there is life there is the power of will, and that is the power of working, if need be of suffering. Disappointment will have a weakening effect for a while, but it will only be for a while if we have any strength in us. If there be the fixed determination to do what the hand findeth to do, even though it may seem poor and mean, we need not fear that any experience, any separation, any love, any effort of our past lives will be utterly lost to us. To act in the present is not necessarily to break with the past. Let us gather up the fragments that remain. Though sometimes we may be cast down, let us know that we are not destroyed; though we have sometimes fallen, let us trust that we shall not be cast away, for the Lord upholdeth us with His hand.

L. CAMPBELL, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 88.

REFERENCES: iv. 10.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi, p. 59. iv 11.—T. Birkett Dover, *A Lent Manual*, p. 139. iv. 12.—A. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 5; W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 11.

Chap. iv., ver. 13.—"We believe, and therefore speak."

FAITH, the Ear of the Soul.

Every Christian has heard what is worthy of repetition.

I. Jesus Christ is Himself a word. Jesus spake—not His lips, but Himself. His nature, His presence, His character, His deeds were voice—not echo. He was the living word of the living God.

II. But the lips of Jesus Christ spake also.

III. And the Christian has heard. The Apostles first heard, and they believed and spake. Other faithful men heard, believed, and spake. Through this means the voice of God is made yet to linger upon earth, and the Christians of this day have heard and do hear Christ's voice. To them Christ speaks from heaven. He who hath an ear for godlike grace and eternal truth will hear Divine love and wisdom in Christ the voice and in the voice of Christ.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Pulpit*, 3rd series, p. 145.

REFERENCES: iv. 13.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 494; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 347; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 199; G. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 328; J. Sherman, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 151. iv. 14-18.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 264; vol viii., p. 89; vol. ix., p. 149; vol. xxiv., p. 313; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 158.

Chap. iv., ver. 15.—"For all things are for your sakes."

I. THE text teaches this glorious fact, that "all things are yours" or "for your sakes." Every process of godly advancement is all to our advantage. Christ is heir of all things. Then if Christ is yours all things are yours. Let us understand and do justice to that expression "all things are yours" as to this, not only the present wealth and possession, but the power we have in connection with that wealth for present enjoyment and usefulness. It is in proportion as I feel "all things are mine" that I feel joy unspeakable and full of glory. Exactly in proportion as we have faith to grasp these mighty truths do they carry us through all our difficulties. Lay hold of these truths now; they will give you a joy, strength, and power no tongue can tell.

II. The text turns our attention off from self to others. "All things are yours." There is the value of the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Whether we see what He is doing or not, whether we can understand its bearing or not, whether we can realise its benefit or not, the fundamental truth in regard to practical and experimental Christianity is "The Lord reigneth." With His Son He has promised, pledged, and secured to me eternal happiness and glory. Then what follows? Everything that occurs to me must be subordinate to that. All things must

of moral necessity work together for my good. Trials serve to bring me nearer to God, to make me more meet for the everlasting inheritance, and finally to be the means which will bring me before my God perfect as He is perfect, holy as He is holy. The text goes on to say "that the abundant grace may through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God"; that is, that God's people may be increased in number, and that those who are so, in their increased grace, devotedness, usefulness, and all else which results from a higher order of spiritual experience, may in the whole of their character and conversation redound to the glory of God.

C. MOLYNEUX, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 365.

REFERENCES: iv. 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 331. iv. 16.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 55; H. W Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 362; J. Leckie, *Sermons at Ibrox*, p. 161. iv. 16-18.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, p. 389; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 309; J. Duncan, *The Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 261. iv. 17.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 54. iv. 17, 18.—R. W. Church, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 344; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 88; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 62.

Chap. iv., ver. 18.—"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

THINGS Temporal and Things Eternal.

I. There is a truth which we all know equally well—whether we are learned or ignorant, old or young; we are all equally well assured of the truth—that the things which we see are temporal—only for a time and fast passing away. And yet, though we know it so well, our heavenly Father seems to take great pains to remind us of it constantly, as if it were of very great consequence that we should be continually thinking of it, and as if we were very likely, practically, to forget it. All the changes in us and about us are the voice of God; and when He speaks, infinitely important is it that we should listen to His voice; but there is another way in which He speaks to us more distinctly than this, *i.e.*, the Bible. We that are alive live more among the dead than among the living. When we read a book and think of the person who wrote it as a friend, and ask for him, it is very likely we shall find that he is now among the dead and not among the living. When we talk of acquaintances and others, how often do we find, as it were accidentally, that they are now among the dead and not among the living. And in-

deed, with all persons who have lived any time in the world, and who are at all given to reflection, their affections and their thoughts are more among the dead than the living.

II. Nature does not declare to us that the things which are not seen are eternal, but when God has made everything to preach aloud to us such warnings about everything here slipping away from under our feet, we might conclude that there was something coming on, something of great consequence. What it will be to wake from the grave and to find ourselves in one of these states, for good or evil, this must be a thought of which we can have no adequate conception. But we may form some faint idea of it from things temporal. For a sailor to find after a very dangerous voyage that he is indeed safe upon shore —or for a soldier to find that the battle is over and that he is safe—for persons to find after a state of very great danger that they are saved, we may tell what their feelings are; and this may give us some idea of what it will be to wake in eternity and to find that we are safe, that we shall never again be separated from Jesus Christ.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. ii., p. 1.

THE Seen and the Unseen.

I. The things which are not seen: what are they? Doubtless they are in part those moral and spiritual truths and virtues which are obscured or crowded out of view in the present life of most of us, but which are nevertheless beautiful and enduring realities: they are justice, charity, truth, sanctity. We see an approximation to these things in the lives of God's servants on earth, but we do not see the perfect and abstract qualities themselves: they lie beyond the sphere of sense; they are perfectly seen, and seen only, as attributes of the Most Holy and the Self-Existent. The things which are not seen: we do not see (1) God, (2) the angels, (3) the souls of the departed. That which meets the eye of sense is here only for a season; it will pass away. That which meets the eye of the soul illuminated by faith is known to belong to another order of existence. It will last for ever. It is this quality of eternity, of enduring, of unlimited existence, which makes the Christian look so intently on the things which are not seen.

II. This truth as to the relative importance of the seen and the unseen, if it be really held, will affect our lives in not a few ways. It will, for instance, govern the disposal of our income. If we look only at the things which are seen, we shall spend

it mainly upon ourselves, reserving, perhaps, some portion for objects of a public character, what is creditable or popular to support. If we look mainly at the things which are not seen, we shall spend at least one-tenth, probably more, upon some agencies that will bring the eternal world, and all that prepares people for it, home to our fellow-creatures. In days of prosperity a Christian's prayer should constantly be: "Oh turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity, and quicken me in Thy way."

H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 387.

If the things which are seen are temporal,—

I. The good things seen are not enough for us.

II. The grievous things seen should not make the Christian faint.

III. In nothing seen ought a man to find either his hell or his heaven.

Two duties spring from this truth. (1) The duty of moderation in our use and enjoyment of all things seen. (2) The duty of seeking a heritage and portion in that which is unseen and eternal.

S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 83.

For and by things temporal are given things eternal. There is a great deal said about looking away from the things of time to the things of eternity; and Paul is credited with this idea on the score of the language of the text. Whether he would accept the credit is more doubtful. It certainly is no conception of his, that we are to ignore the temporal and go clear of it, in order to being fixed in the eternal. Indeed this kind of prescription, so constantly reiterated and soaked in, as it were, by a long dull-minded usage, is really about the most noxious drug that Christian living has ever had put in its way. How can we think in real earnest that such a world as this was made just to be looked away from? And if we try to do it, tearing our mind away from the visible and the temporal, and requiring it to see only the invisible and eternal, how certainly do we find the air too thin to support our flighty endeavour, and drop away shortly on the ground, held down to it, after all, by temporal weights and visibilities we cannot escape. And just here I imagine is the reason, in great part, of that inability to realise or give a sound existence to spiritual things of which so many complain: they misconceive the problem.

It is not to literally look away from temporal things in order to see the eternal, but it is to see the temporal in the eternal, or through it and by means of it. By not looking at the temporal things, Paul means simply not fastening our mind to them or upon them as the end of our pursuit.

I. There is a fixed relation between the temporal and the eternal, such that we shall best realise the eternal by rightly using the temporal. We shall best conceive the true point here by observing the manner of the Apostle himself, for it was one of the remarkable things about him as a Christian that he was so completely under the power, so sublimely invigorated by the magnitudes of the world to come; longing for it, wishing himself in it, and carrying the sense of it with him into the hearts of all who heard his preaching. Things temporal he saw, and a great deal more penetratingly than any mere worldly mind could; saw far enough into them to discover their unsolidity and their transitory and ephemeral consequence, and to apprehend just so much the more distinctly the solid and eternal verities represented by them. Things and worlds are passing—shadows all that pass away. The durable and strong, the real continent, the solid lasting place is beyond. But the present things are good for the passage, good for signs, good as shadows. So he tramps on through them, cheering his confidence by them, having them as reminders, and renewing day by day his outward man by what of the more solid and glorious future is so impressively represented and so solidly set forth in them. He does not refuse to see with his eyes what God puts before his eyes.

II. We have eternals garnered up in us all, in our very intelligence; immortal affinities which, if we forget or suppress, are still in us; great underlaid convictions also, ready to burst up in us and utter even ringing pronouncements; and besides there is an inevitable and sure summons always close at hand, as we know, and ready for its hour. Consent that you are dying and that time is falling away, and your soul will arrive at the conviction of God's eternity and of things beyond this life very soon. Nay, she will hear voices of eternity crying out in her own deep nature, and commanding her on to a future more solid and reliable than any mere temporalities can afford.

H. Bushnell, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 268.

The Invisible World.

I. We are in a world of spirits, as well as in a world of sense,

and we hold communion with it and take part in it, though we are not conscious of doing so. If this seems strange to any one, let him reflect that we are undeniably taking part in a third world, which we do indeed see, but about which we do not know more than about the angelic hosts—the world of brute animals. Can anything be more marvellous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a race of beings about us whom we do but see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is indeed a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds upon it, that we familiarly use—I may say, hold intercourse with—creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious as if they were the fabulous, unearthly beings, more powerful than man and yet his slaves, which Eastern superstitions have invented. Is it not plain to our senses that there is a world inferior to us in the scale of beings, with which we are connected without understanding what it is? and is it difficult for faith to admit the word of Scripture concerning our connection with a world superior to us?

II. The world of spirits, then, though unseen, is present, not future, not distant. It is not above the sky; it is not beyond the grave: it is now and here; the kingdom of God is among us. Men think they are ends of this world, and may do as they will. They think this earth their property and its movements in their power, whereas it has other ends beside them, and is the scene of a higher conflict than they are capable of conceiving. It contains Christ's little ones whom they despise, and His angels whom they disbelieve; and these at length shall take possession of it and be manifested. We are looking for the coming of the day of God, when all this outward world, fair though it be, shall perish; when the heavens shall be burnt and the earth melt away. We can bear the loss, for we know it will be but the removing of a veil. We know that to remove the world which is seen, will be the manifestation of the world which is not seen. We know that what we see is as a screen hiding from us God and Christ and His saints and angels. And we earnestly desire and pray for the dissolution of all that we see, from our longing after that which we do not see.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 200.

REFERENCES: iv. 18.—J. Leckie, *Sermons at Ibrox*, p. 350; W. J. Knox-Little, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 351; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 169; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1380;

Ibid., Morning by Morning, p. 29; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 357; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 225; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 387; *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 204; *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 266; W. G. Horder, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 115; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 50; F. W. Farrar, *Every-day Christian Life*, p. 70; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 131; vol. ix., p. 213; J. R. Illingworth, *Sermons*, p. 32; *Saturday Evening*, pp. 95, 102. v. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1719; C. Moore, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 411; J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 150; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 10th series, p. 135. v. 1, 2.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 77. v. 1-4.—*Preacher's Lantern*, vol. i., p. 533. v. 1-5.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 33.

Chap. v., ver. 4.—"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."

THE Two Tabernacles.

I. A tabernacle is a frail temporary dwelling, generally of cloth, which men make for shelter by night, when they expect to be so short a time in the place that it is not worth while to erect a more substantial edifice. The body is frequently compared to dust. It is glorious as the starry sky, and yet as fading as a summer flower.

II. *This* tabernacle. The house in which we now dwell is not our only dwelling-place. The design of the Spirit in this word is to preserve us from bestowing all our regard on this tabernacle while another is more worthy. When the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. "Blessed are the home-sick, for they shall get home."

III. *Burdened.* Our burdens are useful. They may be inventoried among the all things that work together for good. "The sorrows of earth will enhance the joys of heaven."

IV. "Not that we would be unclothed." Christians love life for many reasons. They love it with a deeper, more intelligent love than other creatures, because the gifts which are in their own nature sweet, are sweeter when they are received from a Father's hand. This disciple fully comprehends and clearly expresses what he likes and what he does not like in connection with living and dying. He is willing to meet the necessity of putting off this mortal coil, for the sake of the glory that shall follow, but he frankly confesses that the act of putting off is not agreeable. He not only submits to it, he bounds forward to

meet it joyfully; but the cause of his buoyancy is above—not of the fire and water of the passage, but of the large place to which the passage leads.

W. ARNOT, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 288.

REFERENCES: v. 4.—E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 396; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 237. v. 4, 5.—T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 177.

Chap. v., ver. 5 (R.V.).—"Now He that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

DETACHING.

The idea of this passage is that the change from the mortal to the immortal is no accident. It is the result of a Divine intent. God wrought us for this very thing, and has given us the earnest, the foretaste and pledge of this change, through His Spirit. Our text, therefore, is the expression of the truth that in God's economy this life is a process of disentangling and detachment from its own conditions. Mortal life, so far as related to itself, is a getting loose.

I. Consider the imagery of the text. We mortals are as dwellers in a tent. This tent is being gradually loosened down; such is the literal meaning of the word *dissolved*. Plainly enough the average man ignores this fact. He strikes out the tabernacle from the text and substitutes a building. He lives and plans as if both he and the world were eternal. God meant that our earthly house should be a tent and not a building; meant that it should be transitory and not eternal.

II. God has made us for the tent, but He has also made us for the building. It is God's intent that the immortal, the spiritual life should be taking shape under the forms of mortal life; that in the tent man should be shaping for the eternal building; that in this frail, fleshly environment we should be growing familiar with the powers of the world to come; should be coming more and more under their influence; should be growing more and more into sympathy with the principles and ideas of the eternal world; growing in aspiration for their larger range, and even welcoming the dissolution of the tent as the signal and medium of entrance into the eternal building. The tent will fall. Shall you be left uncovered? Beware of the wrappings. They are folding you in too closely. You are growing in reputation and wealth, and the world is a very pleasant place to you. All well, perhaps, if these things are not all; if, under your busy life, there is the constant presence of God, a carefully fostered keen consciousness of the touch of

God; an unbroken connection between heaven and your tent; a daily interchange between Christ and you; if, in short, your citizenship is in heaven, and the mark of heaven is on your words and your life and your spirit.

M. R. VINCENT, *The Covenant of Peace*, p. 219.

Chap. v., ver. 5.—"Now He that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit."

THE Expectation and the Earnest.

I. What is it that the Apostle here alludes to in the expression "the selfsame thing" to which believers are wrought of God? It is the confident hope of, and longing desire for, the glories and felicities of the resurrection state. In his bosom and that of his fellow-believers, this hope and desire dwelt fresh and vigorous. They had not a mere vague wish to enjoy a future felicity of some sort, they knew not what. Theirs was a firm anticipation of a well-understood and clearly realised futurity of blessedness and glory.

II. But to what was it owing that the Apostles had this confident expectation, which so inspired, cheered, and ennobled them in the service of the gospel? The answer of the Apostle, in the words before us, is to the effect that God was the Author and Source of the state of mind of which he speaks. He had wrought in them the blessed hope which they exultingly entertained. He had moulded them wholly to it.

III. But the Apostles had something more than mere hope to sustain them and cheer them amid the trials and conflicts of life. They had in actual possession a portion of the promised blessing, and in that the pledge and assurance of the whole. God had given them the earnest of the Spirit.

W. LINDSAY ALEXANDER, *Sermons*, p. 168.

REFERENCES: v. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvi., No. 912; G. Dawson, *Sermons on Disputed Points*, p. 152; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 99; L. Mann, *Life Problems*, p. 91. v. 5-10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1303; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 107.

Chap. v., ver. 7.—"For we walk by faith, not by sight."

I. WE walk by faith, in the conviction that what is right must end in peace, and what is wrong must end in misery. This assumes that there is a living and true God; that there is a real kingdom on earth—a government over men so constituted that right must come right, and wrong must come wrong; that by no possibility—by no combination of circumstances, by no power

of men or devils—can wheat bring forth tares, or tares wheat; that never can there be separated the consequences from evil so long as evil continues; nor can anything but good and peace come from well-doing.

II. We walk by faith in reference to the agencies which God employs for the regeneration and salvation of man. (1) First and chief of these is the gospel of Christ. It is not that the gospel saves, but Jesus Christ of whom the gospel speaks, by reconciling the sinner to God, through faith in His atoning blood, and by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Sight is opposed to this. To lose faith in the gospel, to have faith in anything else accomplishing the things the gospel proposes, is to lose faith in Christ Himself, in His power, in His mercy, and in His will. (2) The Church of Christ is another agency the power or efficacy of which demands faith. Very often the agency is very poor—intellectually as well as spiritually. But walking by faith and not by sight, I perceive that the Church is the very best and purest society on the face of the earth. With all its dross it has the most gold. With all its darkness it has the most light. With all its earthly elements it is the best representative of heaven upon earth. Two thoughts of practical weight suggest themselves here. (1) One is this—encouragement in our duty. The great Captain of our salvation has tolerated us, borne with us, and not cast us off. He who sent such messages to the Seven Churches, recognising their standing and calling, and their glorious privileges, whilst revealing to them their sins, the same Lord who walks amongst the candlesticks does not put out our light. (2) Another thought is one of shame and confusion when we think how weak our faith is, and how slow, how unconstant our walk accordingly is as members of the Christian Church in fulfilling our Lord's calling.

N. Macleod, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 12.

Walking by Faith.

In St. Paul's hand these words were the key to what the heathen, who had no thoughts or desires beyond the present world, must have regarded as an enigma: note, not the resignation only, but the cheerfulness with which he and his fellow-Christians suffered wrong, though despised and obscure; the spoiling of their goods; how they sought death rather than shunned it, and rushed in the face of the King of Terrors, and gathered crowds as they went to the scaffold or stake, singing,

rejoicing, radiant as a bride to the arms of her bridegroom. Paul speaks of scourging, stoning, prisonings, exiles, death itself, with a sort of Divine contempt. He calls them light afflictions: "Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And the reason why is given in our text: "We walk by faith, not by sight."

I. The believer walks by faith in the work and cross of Christ. By faith Noah, by faith Abraham, by faith David, and by faith many other Old Testament saints won themselves a place in the cloud of witnesses. The truth is that the faith of the humblest believers nowadays is, in some senses, a higher attainment than theirs, and there is no flight of human genius I ever saw like the faith of the poorest, weakest, humblest Christian.

II. The believer walks by faith in the providence of God. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge of Him;" and this in every tongue savage or civilised. The whole world is vocal with His praise; nor is there any ear so deaf as may not hear that, as well in the songs of the happy birds as in the voice of the tempest and the peals of thunder. Though that may be true of the general providence of God, what may be called His special providence, at least so far as regards His own, is very often with them much more a thing of faith than it is a thing of sight.

III. The believer walks by faith in and to another world. It is no easy thing to walk by faith, not by sight; amid the things seen to love the unseen; to be in this world, and not of it; but we have the blessed promise, "As thy days, so shall thy strength be."

T. Guthrie, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 571.

The principle of walking by faith, not by sight, is reasonable and right,—

I. Because the principle of faith is more excellent in its object.

II. Because the principle of faith is more excellent in its effect upon the character and heart.

III. Because to walk by faith produces happiness.

J. N. Norton, *Golden Truths*, p. 377.

References: v. 7.—*Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 289; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 73; vol. vii., p. 65; F. E. Paget, *Sermons for Special Occasions*, p. 1; Bishop Westcott, *The Historic Faith*, p. 173; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 677; J. L. Davies, *Christian*

World Pulpit, vol. xxxv., p. 244. v. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 413; G. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 205; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiii., p. 266; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 113. v. 8, 9.—S. G. Green, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 177. v. 9.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ii., p. 160.

Chap. v., ver. 10.—"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The Certainty of Judgment.

I. If it were a matter of choice whether we would be judged or not, whether we would be tried according to the terms of the gospel-covenant, or be utterly destroyed and perish for ever like the beasts, it is not to be doubted that very many persons, perhaps most, would choose the last. They would willingly enough part with the future rewards of religion, if they might but enjoy without fear or restraint the present pleasures of sin. If they could get rid of hell, they would not mind the loss of heaven. But, however, be it good or evil, it matters not; whatever we might wish, it is not now in our power to choose: we *must* appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; we *must* give an account of our own works.

II. God knows us thoroughly, but there are some who do not yet know us—namely, the angels, other men, and ourselves. To these, therefore, we shall be laid open and made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ. (1) First of all, our whole hearts will be set forth before the angels; for though we are taught that those blessed spirits do continually watch over us for good, and are filled with heavenly joy when we serve God with regularity, order, and diligence, yet we have no reason to believe that they are now acquainted with the secrets of our hearts. If we are not quite hardened to all sense of shame, we must, at least in some degree, be affected by the consideration that our most secret sins, our most cunning deceits, shall be all laid open by the Judge Himself, before that mighty assembly of blessed and holy angels. (2) Let us remember again that our hearts and lives will be shown forth in their true and proper colours, to all men as well as all angels. Then it will be seen how different many of our outward actions and words were from our inward thoughts. Then will be seen how little use it is for man to approve, if God disapprove; how little harm it is for man to hate us, if God love us. There is nothing

covered that shall not be then revealed, nor hid which shall not be then made known to the whole world.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. i., p. 9.

HUMAN Judgment the Earnest of Divine.

I. The outward course of justice strikes a chord in our inward conscience. The man was lately perhaps free, fearless, among his fellows; the crime was past; no evidence, he thought, at hand. Justice, instructed he knows not how, makes him its prisoner; no need, mostly, of outward force; the accused lies helpless in the law's inexorable power: pity has to yield to justice; one even course leads him on to his sentence. Guilt is so powerless. Conscience tells us that we too are amenable to justice—if not to human, to Divine. The earthly attribute of justice is awful because it awakens in us the thought of the Divine, which is so unspeakably holy and awful to us because we are sinners.

II. God's justice, by those universal laws which express the divinely gifted reason of mankind, speaks further to the conscience by its minuteness. Human law does not leave petty offences unpunished. It imitates herein the merciful justice of God, who knows that the truest mercy to the sinner is to arrest him by light punishment in the beginning of his sin, and so deals to us in those offences which, not being amenable to human law, are a special province of His own immediate justice. Reason itself concurs with revelation that this judgment will be very minute, very searching. Judgment which did not take account of everything would be a partial, unjudging judgment: in man's sight imperfect; in God, an impossible contradiction. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Words are but the gushing forth of the inward self, the pouring out of the inward store, good or bad, laid up within us. Of every idle word shall men give account; for idle objectless words are the fruits of idle objectless souls, away from their centre, God. Words, tinged or steeped as they may be with the manifold evils of which men's speech is made up, will condemn.

E. B. PUSEY, *University Sermons*, p. 289.

REFERENCES: v. 10.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 313; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1076; G. Calthrop, *Words Spoken to my Friends*, p. 29; Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 252; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 259; vol. x., p. 367; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 1.

Chap. v., ver. 11.—"Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.'

ETERNAL Punishment.

Whatever the reason may be, men do not now think much about the terror of the Lord, and preachers do not now preach much about it. The spirit of the day is sceptical. The bold assertions of the past provoke nothing but a gently subdued contempt. Men are now proudly certain of but one thing, and that is that there is nothing of which they can be certain. And this spirit has diffused itself through the abodes of Christian belief. It has diluted itself until an uninfluential assent has taken the place of a realistic belief; the fires of faith have been put out and only the grey ashes remain, and the terror of the Lord has become "A tale of little meaning, though the words are strong."

I. But many of us, whose faith if not vivid is yet what is called sound, are in danger of perverting that great article of Christian belief, the remission of sins; and the spirit of profligacy does pervert it, and the spirit of moral vulgarity perverts it, and the spirit of cowardly improvidence longs to have it so. The perversion is, that the punishment of sin is to be remitted, that the forgiveness of sins practically means letting us off from the penalty of our sins, that it is going to be all right whatever we do, that there is no hell, and that men may make themselves quite comfortable, for there is nothing in the future to fear. Now against all this the Christian teacher must never cease to protest, for it is a great lie; it is a flat contradiction to the laws of nature. There is no remission of the punishment of sin. The saint must bear his punishment, and the impenitent sinner ever augment his. God is not the feeble, good-natured God of languid profligacy. In one sense He is unmerciful and unrelenting.

II. Sin is always a process of self-destruction, and its most fearful consequences are upon the moral and spiritual nature itself. Its first effect is pain, the pain inflicted by conscience when wrong has been consciously done. That lie, that lust, that cowardly cruelty, that self-seeking hypocrisy, all that thou hast done, has made its mark on thee, has made thee something other than thou mightest have been. On the unseen face which stands behind thine eyes, every sin has marked its line. Again, every sin will have this punishment, that it will entail a lower place in the kingdom of heaven than we might have had. The opportunity lost or misimproved to-day is an eternal

perdition. "Wisdom can put away sin, but she cannot pardon it, and she is apt, in her haste, to put away the sinner as well, when the black ægis is on her breast." And now, whatever scepticism may say, and whatever sentimental religionism may say, this is what in her own way science says and this is what the Bible says: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap."

W. PAGE-ROBERTS, *Liberalism in Religion*, p. 123.

REFERENCES: v. 11.—R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 165. v. 11-15.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 35. v. 12-17.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 322; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 201. v. 13.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 213; A. J. Parry, *Phases of Christian Truth*, p. 144.

Chap. v., vers. 13-15.

PAUL'S Passion for Christ.

I. The Apostle affirms that the distinctive inspiration of his passionate fervour and entire consecration is the person and mission of Jesus Christ—"The love of Christ constraineth us." It is distinctively love for a person—"The truth as in Jesus." Everything in Christianity centres in Christ's person. Christian doctrines are simply explanations of the facts of Christ's personal history; so that Jesus Christ Himself is the personal and exclusive object of our religious trust and love. Take Christ away, and Christianity disappears. His acts as a personal Redeemer constitute it. Behind all Christian idea stands the ineffable Christ Himself—that wondrous personality of peerless sanctity, ineffable love, Divine characteristic, and human perfection: the embodiment, not of one class of excellences only, but of all.

II. Among even the supernatural characteristics of Christ's personality and of His mission, Paul gives a singular and emphatic prominence to His death—"He died for all." Whenever Paul gives such account of his enthusiasm for Christ as makes Festus think him mad, as makes the Grecian philosophers write him down a fool, he always specifies the death on the cross as its distinctive inspiration—"He loved me and gave Himself for me." Accept Paul's idea of the cross as a sacrifice for human sin, everything is natural and obvious; deny it, try to construct some other theory of His death, Paul's sentiment and passion are the greatest of anomalies. Note two characteristics of this constraint. (1) Its intensity. The depth and passion of Paul's personal and practical love for Jesus Christ are simply indescribable. (2) Much might be said about the

humanity of this great inspiration—the marvellous way in which grateful love to Christ becomes a Christlike love, a philanthropic love, full of human sympathies, solicitudes, and services.

H. ALLON, *The Indwelling Christ*, p. 83.

REFERENCES: v. 13-15.—D. Bagot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 373; W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 12.

Chap. v., ver. 14.—"The love of Christ constraineth us."

I. ST. PAUL'S was, in every sense of the word, a great conversion. It was great (1) as showing the omnipotence of God. Nothing was more unlikely, humanly speaking, than that a man of perfect outward life, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, should sacrifice everything for this new sect of the Nazarenes. But although, as a general rule, God works in a quiet ordinary way,—though, as a general rule, "what a man sows he reaps," still God is pleased to keep, if I may so express myself, a reserve of supernatural force. God is able to bring a higher law, as yet unknown to us, to bear upon these lower laws with which we are familiar, and so to modify them that supernatural results are accomplished. (2) And it was a great conversion when we look at it in relation to the world. The conversion of the world was, humanly speaking, hanging upon the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. The individual life has wrapped up in it a power in the world which no one is able to calculate. And (3) it was a great conversion in relation to the individual Apostle. It was a great sacrifice nobly made.

II. And if we ask, What was the moving power of this great transformation—what was the secret of this change? I answer in the words of my text, It was the love of Christ that constrained him. The conversion of St. Paul was the result of the epiphany of Jesus Christ. It was a manifestation of a living Person taking hold of a living person's will that conquered St. Paul and made him the fervent and believing Apostle. And if we want in our measure and degree the power of St. Paul to overcome obstacles, to break down prejudices, to crush the rebel flesh, to rise above the world, to be indifferent alike to its praise and its blame—if we wish to follow St. Paul, we also must know something of that love of Christ by which he was constrained.

G. WILKINSON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 552.

CHRIST'S Love to us our Law of Life.

I. We love Christ, indeed, because He first loved us. Our

love is the reflection of the original light—the heavenly ray bent back again towards its source; and where this love towards Him exists, it becomes a motive of perpetual service. But this is not St. Paul's intention; he is here speaking of the motive of that motive. What is it that awakens our love to Him but His love first to us? Love is the principle of obedience, but the principle of love is love. And of this the Apostle speaks—the love which descends from Him to us. Let us begin at the source of all. God is love, and love is the law of His kingdom. There is a hierarchy of love, having its beginning in the eternal Three, descending from the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost to all orders of created spirits, angelic and ministering, and to all creatures in earth and heaven, binding all in one. Love is the stooping of the higher to the lower, the Creator to the creature, the parent to the child, the stronger to the weaker, the sinless to the sinful—God stooping down to man. The penetrating exalting consciousness that we are objects of the love of God—this love, which has its fountains in eternity, has made apostles, martyrs, saints, and penitents. And this consciousness is awakened in us by a sense of the love of Christ.

II. See next how this motive works in us: what is the operation and effect of the love of Christ? (1) It constrains; that is, it lays a force upon us, as a strong hand draws us whithersoever it will. There are in creation powers of attraction which control whole orders of nature; as the loadstone, which draws its subjects to itself, and the sun, to which all nature answers. These are the constraining forces of the natural world—a parable of the attractions of the Spirit. We know this by familiar experience in our lower life. What awakens love like love? What constrains us to the presence of another but a consciousness of his love to us? The sense of Christ's love is the mightiest of all constraining motives. It embraces our whole spiritual nature, touches it in all its springs, moves it in all its affections, stirs it in all its energies. (2) The love of Christ felt in the heart is the only source of unreserved devotion and of perfect sacrifice of self. Those who in all ages have done and suffered great things for the kingdom of God knew no motive but this. They had received the fire which falls from heaven, and as it kindled, their hearts pleaded with them in secret and pressing words: "He wholly gave Himself for me: shall I give less to Him?" (3) This Divine motive is the only principle of an enduring perseverance. It grows stronger as it acts; by acting it is made perfect. Long trials of Christ's love

in joy and sorrow, in storm and sunshine, reveal its Divine tenderness and depth. And this quickens the activity of our own hearts with a living, thirsting desire to love Him with a greater love again. Steadfast love is perseverance; it supports through all weariness and disappointment, all allurement and alarm. A true love to Christ moves in its path year by year, without haste but without tarrying, calm, bright, and onward as the light of heaven.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 1.

I. THERE can be but little wanting to the happiness of any person who can, with sincerity, say that these words describe the habitual state of his own mind. It is possible that faith, the deepest and liveliest faith in the excellence and worthiness of Christ, may be so mixed with fears for our own unworthiness, that we may not taste fully the comfort of Christ's Spirit. But he who is constantly constrained by the love of Christ, who leaves evil things undone, who does good things actively, because his sense of Christ's love is ever present with him, will feel what St. John expresses, no doubt from the experience of his own heart, that "perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment."

II. The facts which should naturally excite this love are known to all. Go back as far as we will, approach as closely to the time of our Lord's appearing on earth as our existing records will allow, still we can trace no fuller knowledge of the facts of our Lord's sufferings and death than we can all gain—than we have actually gained from the four Gospels now in our possession. That story which we know so well, but feel so little, is precisely the same which constrained so many of God's servants in different ages, which constrains so many at this moment, to count all things but loss for Christ's sake, to govern their whole lives and thoughts by the principle of love and gratitude to their Saviour. The difference is assuredly not in our knowledge, but in ourselves; that which has been the very bread of life to others is to us tasteless, weak, and ineffectual.

III. Christ's Spirit is given to Christ's redeemed; it is His promise to His people. Think you that you can obtain it of yourselves, before you offer yourselves to Him? No; it is not only a great truth of the gospel, but it is the very gospel itself, that all which is demanded of us, in the first instance, is, that the love of Christ should constrain us to come to Him, that feeling our own weakness and His power, we should come to Him

in repentance and faith, grieving for our own evil and trusting to Him to cure us.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: v. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1411; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 295; T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 2; 7; W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 372; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 10; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii, p. 253; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 102; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 25; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 329; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 85; G. Wilkinson, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 145.

Chap. v., vers. 14, 15.—"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again."

EITHER there is a contradiction in this passage, or St. Paul's conception of love and its power is not the same with the one which is most prevalent among us. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we judge." Here seems to be a process of the understanding strangely mixed up with a compulsion acting on the feelings or the heart. If the Apostle had to argue with himself that Christ died for all, because all were dead, and that men might not live to themselves, how can he affirm that a mere sense or passion of devotion to his Master urged him on to act or to suffer? If he was under the influence of such a passion, what need or what possibility of thinking, of deliberating, of concluding?

I. I would remark, at the outset, that the love of Christ can scarcely mean the love which the Apostle had, or which any man has, for Christ. The very word "constrains" seems to suggest the thought of an atmosphere surrounding us, compressing us—of a power bearing upon us. It would be the strangest phrase imaginable if it meant something which proceeded from ourselves, a smoke or incense rising up to heaven. But a love coming down upon us, the love of a superior Being speaking to us, is not limited. The sunlight of a parent's or a teacher's countenance does not act merely on the affections of a child, it acts upon his intellect; it gives him courage to think, power to perceive, vivacity in all parts of his being. The love of Christ, then, might well constrain the judgment to a right and reasonable conclusion, as well as the hands to right and reasonable acts. If you suppose the Divine love to work on any creature, you would expect it to act generally, diffusively—to leave no

faculty just as it was before, to bring those out into particular clearness and vigour which were most ready for the influence; sometimes to cause an immediate glow in the passive and susceptible feelings, sometimes to stir up the active powers; sometimes to reach the heart directly, sometimes to reach it through the narrow and winding passages of the understanding.

II. The sense in which these words were most applicable to the Apostle of the Gentiles, is the sense in which they are most applicable to us—to us as forming a society of men; to each one of us as an individual man; to the layman and to the priest. A man may confess the constraint of the love of Christ who is most conscious of his own struggle against it, of the effort he has made to be independent of it, of the fierce determination he has often come to that he will entirely break the bonds of love asunder and cast away its cords from him. Still the love of Christ has been pressing him round, above, beneath, seeking to penetrate and possess him. If he yields to it, it will not be less felt as a constraint; he will not boast that now it is his own choice which is governing him, and not another who is guiding and leading him. He must rejoice to feel that his will has been made captive by the true will which it was formed to obey. He must distinctly and deliberately judge that such authority, enforcing such obedience, is the true source of all freedom.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 223.

THE Service of Love.

We have in these words a true answer to the question most important for us all; namely, What, in its true essence, stripped of all its accidents and outer garb, what is true religion? To St. Paul religion is not a service of fear, not a service of necessity, not that which a man does because he dreads, not that which he does because he must; but it is a service of love, that which he would wish to do even if he might leave it undone.

I. All true religion begins in the response of our hearts to the love of God as manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord. We begin to live a life which is a service of love, which has been rendered ever since, just so far as by God's grace we have been able to render it, under the controlling influence of the love of Christ in our hearts.

II. It is a service of love, again, inasmuch as it is a service which is accepted and rewarded solely out of the great Father's tenderness and love toward us. The loving Father, who has implanted these instincts within us, could not be content if His children served only from fear.

III. See what an error it is for us to be over-anxious about success when engaged in rendering this service. Very often in the Christian service we miss success for the simple reason that we are too anxious for it. Be not over-anxious about your spiritual success. Let the motto of the Apostle be the motto of your life. Whatever cometh, go forth joyously, gladly, untiringly, the love of Christ constraining you.

IV. See once more what a useful test this should apply, by which we are to judge the degree of the efforts we are making in seeking the direct spiritual good of those around us. It is very often wise for us to take counsel of our affection rather than of our intellect. Let us not be mean here; let us not stint in our measure here; let the love of Christ constrain us.

S. NEWTH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 300.

I. THE love of Christ is an interpretation of the sorrows of the world. Nowhere are the mysteries and the sadness of life presented more impressively than in the Bible. The gospel does not in any way dissemble the evils by which we are saddened in manifold forms, the pitiless havoc wrought by the forces of nature, the terrible workings of human selfishness, the action of sin within us, of which we are severally conscious; it lays all bare that it may more surely conquer all: it reveals a Divine purpose in suffering; it spreads over all the pure, unsullied light which falls from the Father's eye; it teaches still to look on the whole world as the work of God's wisdom and the object of God's love. Such a view of the world must present all things under a new aspect, and if with open hearts we allow the love of Christ, incarnate, crucified, ascended, to have its perfect work, it enables us to face the mysteries of earth and man with confidence and with hope. The fact of sonship presses upon us the utmost obligation of service as our answer to the Father's will; and it also reveals a Father's compassion as our sure refuge when we mourn over duties imperfectly fulfilled. The love of Christ affirms an unconquerable purpose where we see partial disaster, an inalienable fellowship where we mourn over jealousy and strife, the germ of a heavenly nature where we struggle with a masterful selfishness.

II. The love of Christ is a personal call. The hierarchy of nature is ruled by a scale of duties corresponding to endowments, of service corresponding to strength. All duties, all service alike are tempered together, and contribute to one end through

the love of Christ towards us and in us. And here human love reveals the law of highest fellowship, which prejudices of race or class or caste or education are always trying to hinder and to hide. Nothing will go well with us till we have mastered the lesson, till the strong feel that they need the weak to teach them the grace of considerate tenderness, and the weak feel that they need the strong to inspire them with the joy of thankful reverence, till weak and strong alike feel that they are labourers together in Christ with God, joint-heirs of the grace of life.

BISHOP WESTCOTT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 106.

REFERENCES: v. 14, 15.—W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 365; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 132; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 90. v. 15.—F. Emerson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 246; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 9. v. 16.—*Ibid.*, p. 331; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 160. v. 16.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 129.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—**"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."**

SUCH is the change which passes upon Christians through the power of Christ their Lord; they are made new creatures. And this deep mystery of our own renewed being flows out of the mystery of Christ's incarnation. He took our manhood and made it new in Himself, that we might be made new in Him. He hallowed our manhood, and carried it up into the presence of His Father as the firstfruits of a new creation. And we shall be made new creatures through the same power by which He was made man—the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost.

I. We are made new creatures by a present change working in our moral nature; that is to say, through our regeneration in holy baptism. By the love of God electing us to a new birth of the spirit, and by the Holy Ghost working through that visible sacrament, we are translated from wrath to grace, from the power of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. Old things pass away and all things become new round the regenerate man.

II. But further, Christians are new creatures by present, ever-growing holiness of life—by the renewing of their very inmost soul. They are absolutely new creatures—new in the truth of moral reality; new altogether, but still the same. It is moral contradiction, moral conflict, the clash of moral antagonists, that makes God and man to be two, and the race of man as divided as it is numerous; and so is it in every living soul

changed by the grace of God. He was an evil creature, he is a holy one; that is, he was an old, he is new. When the flesh is subdued to the spirit, and Satan bruised under our feet, this old world passes away as a shadow, and the new stands out as the visible reality from which the shadow fell; and the whole man grows into a saint. The lowliest and most unlettered man, to whom written books are mysteries; the tiller of the ground, the toiling craftsman, the weary trader; the poor mother fostering her children for God; the little ones whose angels do always behold the face of their Father in heaven,—all these, by the Spirit of Christ working in them, are changed into a saintly newness and serve with angels, and look into the mystery of God with the cherubim and adore with the seraphim of glory.

III. Let us therefore learn some lessons of encouragement. Unlikely as it may seem, our most confident and cheering hopes will be found to arise out of the awful reality of our regeneration. In you old things are passed, as the night is passed when the darkness is driven before the coming day; and new things are come, as the day is come when the white morning steals up the sky. There may be thronging clouds and weeping showers before midday, but to every penitent man the noon shall come at last. Lastly, live above the world, as partakers of the new creation. He that is "the beginning of the creation of God" is knitting together in one His mystical body, making up the number of His elect; and to this end is He working in each one of us, cleansing and renewing us after His own image. All things about us teem with a new perfection. For a while it must needs be that our eyes are holden; were they but opened we should understand that even now are we in the heavenly city. Its walls stand round about us, and they that were seen in Dothan walk in its streets of gold.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 19.

IN considering this statement of the Apostle, there are two main thoughts which seem to occur for our examination. The former of them concerns itself with the enlargement of feeling and sentiment, with that elevation to a higher spiritual platform which St. Paul describes as characteristic of the Christian life. The second concerns itself with that connection subsisting between that elevation and the condition of being "in Christ."

I. Now the state out of which the Apostle describes himself as having arisen, is one in which he "knew men after the flesh" and he knew Christ after the flesh. In other words, he enter-

tained the common, worldly, merely outward estimate of Christ, of man, and of human life, until his belief of the Saviour's resurrection put that estimate aside and replaced it by another, which was nobler in itself and more in accordance with the actual facts of the case. There is something corresponding to this elevation of thought and feeling in the experience of those persons who in the present day are disciples and followers of the Saviour. They have become emancipated from unworthy thoughts of the Saviour's person and character. They have arrived at a conception of Christ which is markedly and unmistakably above what is usually formed and entertained by the majority of mankind. The superiority of conception consists in a real acceptance of the godhead of Jesus Christ.

II. Let Jesus Christ enter your life, and the commonest act is ennobled by being done for Him. Let Christ into your life, and the present—no matter what it is—reaches out and fastens itself on to the distant eternity, and becomes the germ of a never-ending existence. The expression "in Christ" is a sort of key-note, to which the whole of St. Paul's statements and arguments are set; and if we can grasp the meaning of this phrase, we are in a fair way to understand everything else. Our being new creatures, then, and therefore fit for the spiritual state of the Redeemed, depends upon our being in Christ. Our being in Christ depends upon our having sincerely accepted and taken to ourselves, by the Spirit's help, the testimony of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ; upon our having appropriated, in fact, His death, and all that flows and follows from it.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 853.

WHAT must I do to be saved?

I. First of all, it may be right to mention that anxiety for the state of one's soul may be equally real, and yet show itself in different persons in a very different manner. I believe that many good people have been very angry with themselves because they did not weep for their sins, and feel that lively grief which we read of so often in the Scriptures as accompanying repentance. It is of no use to examine nicely into the vehemence or soberness of our feelings, whether of joy or sorrow, of hope or of fear, nor should any one think himself not in earnest because he cannot pass sleepless nights or shed floods of tears for the sinful state in which he has been living.

II. I will suppose that a man is roused sincerely to ask the question, "What must I do to be saved?" and wants some plain

and particular directions to serve as his answer. The first rule then to be given is, to be instant in prayer. We might say to such a man, "If you are indeed in earnest, draw near unto God without fear; you are pardoned already for Christ's sake; be sure, therefore, that God loves you enough to give you His Holy Spirit, and to make you that new creature which you wish to be. Pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, that the promise of His Spirit may be fulfilled to you, to guide you safely on your way to heaven." With the practice of prayer, I should earnestly recommend the use of some book of devotion, like Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying" or Bishop Wilson's "Sacra Privata." Books of this kind are sure to furnish, ready to our hand, the very passages of Scripture on which we can dwell most profitably.

III. It is wise to begin a Christian course sincerely, but quietly and soberly; to be not too hasty in endeavouring to reach a very high pitch at first, but to regulate our strength, that it may last out through our whole journey. Leave off at once every known sin; that is the first step, and without that we can do nothing; then be diligent and honest in the duties of your calling, striving to grow in humility and in love to God and man. If you go on with prayer and watchfulness, be not afraid that you will not reach in time the highest point of Christian perfection.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 10.

REFERENCES: v. 17.—T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 8; J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 172; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, 2nd series, p. 94; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 881; vol. xx., No. 1183; vol. xxii., No. 1328; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 275; vol. iii., p. 93; G. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 94; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 97; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 186; G. Matheson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 346; A. Parry, *Phases of the Truth*, p. 221. v. 17, 18.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 274.

Chap. v., ver. 18.—**"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."**

THE Christian Priest.

I. On the first two clauses of the text the third, of course, depends. "He has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation." St. Paul could have no conception, therefore, of a Christian minister, except as a man who was sent to testify that all things were of God, and that He had in Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself. It is involved in the first proposition

that the minister must regard himself as receiving his authority and commission from God. No Jew could think that he held any office whatsoever except by God's appointment. If the priest had not been taught to consider himself as chosen and clothed by God for His service at the altar, he would have been the one exceptional man in the whole commonwealth. The continual assertions in St. Paul's writings that he was an Apostle not of man nor by man are vouchers for this conviction, as far as he himself was concerned. He never suggests that the difference between the Old and the New Testament ministry is, that the one was appointed by God and the other not; that those who had the one might call themselves ministers of God, and that those who had the other might call themselves ministers of some society which had chosen them to do certain offices on its behalf. What he does say is, that the ministers of the Old Testament were, to a great extent, ministers of a letter written and graven in stone, and that those of the New Testament are ministers of the Spirit; that the one are ministers of condemnation, and the others of righteousness; that the one are to exhibit the glory of God under a veil, and that the others are to present it openly, as revealed in Jesus Christ.

II. In modern times, when people have become weary of the oppressions of a body calling itself the universal church on the one side of them, and of the sects which they see tearing nations into pieces on the other, the notion has gone forth that if men could but shake off all the associations which are connected with the priesthood as a Divine institution, and could merely elect officers to perform the devotional services which they think requisite for the satisfaction of their consciences or their religious impulses, a church might grow up suitable to our time, or to some better time that is approaching. If such persons lead us to think that there can be any reconstruction of a church which has not the doctrine that all things are of God at the basis of it, which does not lead us to regard all offices as more, not less Divine than we have regarded them hitherto, I believe we can expect nothing from such a change but the reproduction of all ancient corruptions and the removal of the good which has counteracted them. We have not believed wrongly that we are called by God to our work, and that we cannot perform it if we are not called to it. We have been very wrong in not making it evident that our calling is for your sakes, that we are witnesses of His care for you. We have not been wrong in asserting a communion between God and His

children. We have been very wrong in limiting it according to notions and fancies of ours; in not believing and rejoicing that God may make the truth and the power of which we testify known without our testimony; in not desiring that all shall be prophets, that all shall have God's Spirit; as that old legislator did, who would not suffer the order of the Priesthood to be changed, because it concerned not him, but the nation and its Lord.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 42.

I. CONSIDER one or two things which are not distinctly expressed in this passage, but which are necessarily implied, and must be regarded as underlying what is expressed for it to have any consistent meaning. (1) Humanity, in itself considered, is supposed to be in some way separated from God; in a state of estrangement, if not of antagonism. (2) A second thing implied is that God loved the world, even when it was dead in trespasses and sins. (3) It is also implied that God's love, if it is to take effect in the highest sense, if it is to secure and accomplish the reconciling of the world, must be expressed and manifested in some form of supernatural interposition.

II. Consider what the text does distinctly express and declare. The pre-existing love of God takes a positive form and is made manifest by a Divine act. (1) There would seem to be two reconciliations referred to in the text; there is one which is accomplished by God, and there is another to be secured by man. (2) The reconciliation effected by God was accomplished by His doing two things: "He made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin"; then, as the result of that, He did not impute to men their transgressions. The one thing became possible on the ground of the other. (3) In this reconciliation and return of God to the world, a foundation is laid for the return to and reconciliation of man with God.

III. Christianity is something more than (1) the mission of a teacher or prophet, (2) the embodiment in Christ of perfect virtue, (3) what was simply *subjective* in God, or even (4) the fatherly love of God. There is a true thought in each of these things, but neither includes the whole truth standing alone.

T. BINNEY, *King's Weighhouse Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 51.

REFERENCES: v. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 318; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 568; Spurgeon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 81; H. P. Liddon, *University Sermons*, p. 183. v. 18-21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1124; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 84; W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. i., p. 272.

Chap. v., ver. 19.—"God was in Christ."

God in Christ.

I. "God was in Christ." In the Son of Man, as He loves best to call Himself, who bows His head in death, who suffers the common lot of humanity, that very circumstance of pain and ignominy shows something more than a Divine messenger from God, as some have described Him, or a Divine pleader before God and against God for man, as He has often been pictured. It is a real manifestation or revelation of, or rather a revealer of the very nature of God, that we have in Him. He is in the Father, the Father in Him, and His death is the close of a life in which this human nature, which we all share, has been raised and ennobled by close union with the Divine nature. The world has had before it the crowning act of God's love for the race which He long ago had moulded in something of His own image. It is in the closest union with God that He who was born at Bethlehem and crucified at Calvary has lived and died. The Father and the Son have moved together in the great work of restoration and redemption. There is no crossing or thwarting of the Father's will, no hard-won, dearly bought victory over an offended God.

II. The text is a blessed message, worthy, surely, of the name which the Apostle twice gives it, as one of reconciliation. And he adds one point more: "not imputing"—not reckoning, as our Revisers have more exactly rendered it—"their trespasses unto them." The metaphor, we see at a glance, is that of a debt, freely, frankly forgiven. This power of absolute and entire forgiveness, passing from God through Christ to man, is put among the very foremost attributes of the Divine nature as revealed to us in and by His Son; it is enshrined in our creed, it is embodied in the prayer of prayers, it is emphasised in the Sermon on the Mount, it is appealed to by the dying Sufferer on the Cross. We, whom it costs so hard a struggle, are bidden to forgive freely, "Yea, until seventy times seven"—never to be weary of forgiving.

G. G. Bradley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 257.

References: v. 19.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 638; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 10. v. 20.—E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 37; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 151; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. v. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxii., No. 1910.

Chap. v., ver. 20.—"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ," etc.

The Gospel Embassy.

If any man should ask what is the chief work of the Christian

ministry, here is the answer: God has sent us; we are ambassadors for Christ. God has given us our message, and that message is that He has reconciled the world unto Himself; and He sends us to pray and beseech every one in the world whom we can reach to be reconciled to Him.

I. We are ambassadors—men sent by a King. When an ambassador comes to our country, before he can be received as an ambassador he must show his credentials. St. Paul had proved to those to whom he wrote that he was sent by Christ. He went into the synagogue of the Jews first and testified that Jesus is the Christ. When the Jews refused to receive his message he went to the Gentiles, and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized. No doubt he did miracles also, but they are not mentioned in the account of his embassy to the people of Corinth. The power that went with the message proved that the message was from God. The effects of his message on the minds of the Corinthians were his credentials, for they were the handwriting and the seal of God Himself. They were a new creation. Old things were passed away; all things were become new. They had been renewed in the spirit of their minds, and therefore their life was a new life, and every one might read it for himself.

II. The message is the gospel. God has reconciled us to Himself, and we must be reconciled to Him. He offers us a full, free, eternal pardon for all sins, for all our acts, words, thoughts, done, spoken, and conceived against Him and His law. You must accept that pardon. He assures you that He loves you, loves you with a deep, mysterious, inconceivable love. You must believe that. He tells you that the exceeding great love led Him to give His only-begotten Son to become man, that He might suffer in your place what you deserve to suffer. You will be reconciled to God because you believe that He has reconciled you to Himself.

W. W. CHAMPNEYS, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 405.

Chap. v., ver. 21.—"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

THE Sinless made Sin and the Sinful made Righteous.

I. Jesus Christ was personally sinless.

II. As the voluntary representative of sinful men, Jesus Christ was through a limited period accounted by God a transgressor.

III. The object of God in treating Jesus Christ as a sinner

was to place Himself in a position whence He might account sinful men righteous, and really work righteousness within them. The text shows (1) the riches of the goodness of God, (2) the unutterable love of Christ, (3) an absolute human necessity provided for, and (4) the security of such as participate in Christ's mediation.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 225.

REFERENCES: v. 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., Nos. 141, 142; vol. vi., No. 310; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 95; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 206; A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 320.

Chap. vi., ver. 1.—**"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain."**

I. CONSIDER, first, the Apostle's caution, that we do not receive the grace of God in vain. The word *grace* has various significations in Scripture, some of more restricted and some of wider meaning. Sometimes it denotes mere kindness of purpose, and is applied to the free and unmerited love of God, by which He was first moved to the scheme of human redemption. Sometimes it stands as the general name for the gospel, as indicating the kindlier genesis of that economy as distinguished from the bondage spirit of law. Sometimes it is put for all the sanctifying, comforting, and sustaining influences of the Holy Spirit. But in the text, and in some other passages, the word is better understood in a broader sense than any of these, and indeed as inclusive of them—namely, as referring not only to all the overtures of grace and mercy which God has made to us in the gospel of His dear Son, but to all those ministries of the Word and the Spirit by which those overtures may be most easily accepted. Now such is the perverseness of man's will, it is implied in the text, that all these means and ministries for his happiness may be offered him to no purpose. The injured Father of our spirits may stretch out His hand and find there is none to regard it; and the grace that He would have bestowed upon us for our conversion is either rejected or received in vain.

II. The text supposes that it is a real option with us whether the grace of God is received in vain or not; that despite of all apparent difficulties, whether based upon the Divine decrees or upon the sovereignty and spontaneousness of Divine grace itself, it is practically competent to every one of us to use such means as shall facilitate the proper and effectual influence of

grace upon our minds. While we must cherish the habitual conviction of our dependence upon God's promised influence to render His own message effectual, we are really bound, on the other hand, to use all moral endeavours for making it effectual. We shall receive the grace of God in vain if we receive it doubtingly, with perplexed thoughts, with limitations either in it or in ourselves, calculated to make it insufficient for its end.

D. MOORE, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3395.

CONSIDER certain particulars, in which men, endowed with a certain degree of right feeling in religion, are most apt to go wrong.

I. In the government of their thoughts and imaginations men are apt sometimes to fancy, if they do right, that they may think as they please. But this is surely an inexcusable mistake; for the order and government of our thought proves what we are more distinctly than anything else. In thinking we are alone with God, and the ordering of our thoughts aright is neither more nor less than behaving rightly towards Him. Consider, then, whether your improvement in this respect has been answerable to the means of grace which Almighty God has mercifully afforded you. We ought not to be satisfied with our own devotion of heart, till we find our thoughts returning of their own accord towards heaven whenever they have been interrupted by any worldly call or anxiety.

II. To know whether we are quite sincere in receiving the grace of God, we must consider whether we are the better for it in our daily discourse and conversation with other men. Not that we are to be always talking of religious subjects, but since one of the most necessary truths for a Christian to believe is the corruption of the heart and tongue, it is impossible but that one, who has a true and increasing sense of it, must be more and more on his guard that he offend not in words. This will, perhaps, be the very surest sign and mark by which a sincere man may satisfy his own conscience, that he is really the better for the inestimable love of God in making and keeping him a Christian.

III. Another mark is this—Are we daily becoming more industrious and readier to deny ourselves for the help and comfort of our neighbour? The more we know of the gospel, the more we know of God's love to us, how dear it cost Him, how far it reaches, how unceasing and unwearied it is; the more pressing, therefore, is the call upon us to think nothing too

good for our brethren, no sacrifice too costly to be offered for the sake of ensuring their eternal welfare.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. iv., p. 1.

WHAT is it to receive the grace of God in vain? To this question a threefold answer may be given.

I. There is the non-use of grace—the neglect of a great salvation. In vain is it here, within the sphere of our knowledge and within the possible grasp of our faith, ready for immediate application to all the uses of life and to all its heart-needs, if it be simply ignored.

II. A thing is received in vain if it is perverted and turned to some alien use. Such perversion of the gospel is, alas! too easy and too common. It may be made (1) a cloak for sin, (2) a tent for indolence, (3) the signal for perpetual controversy.

III. There is yet another way of perverting the grace of God, and one which comes closely home to ourselves—the very little and imperfect use we make of it as Christians.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 297.

FELLOW-WORKERS with God.

In these words is expressed the bond of fellowship in which we all meet as brethren in the Church of God: "fellow-workers with God," not blind instruments, not simple recipients, but having freedom to work for ourselves and being called to co-operate in the work with the Almighty Hand which can need nothing of His creatures. This grand yet mysterious title belongs to man as man, but belongs especially to Christians as Christians.

I. Such power is the birthright of humanity, and the birthright, as always, is restored to us in a Diviner perfection by the Lord Jesus Christ. The very mystery of His incarnation is the supreme exemplification of the working together of humanity with Godhead for the salvation of the world. The Christian who knows God as his Father in heaven, and who in the true Son of God and man has at once the strength and the pattern of an energetic service of faith, is without excuse if he ever forgets that he is a fellow-worker with God.

II. What is it to be a fellow-worker with God? There is a true service of God in the sphere of the visible world and this present life; but there is a deeper and truer service in conscious fellow-working for the kingdom which is avowedly the king-

dom of salvation, not touching merely the transitory and visible present, but dealing with that which, being spiritual, is immortal, and so stretching on to an illimitable future.

III. This view of life is full of grandeur and of far-reaching and manifold significance. It has a lesson (1) of humility and sobriety; (2) of confident hor ; (3) of unity among ourselves; (4) of cheerful and hopeful patience.

A. BARRY, *First Words in Australia*, p. 35.

REFERENCES: vi. 1.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; vol. viii., p. 91; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 193; W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. i., p. 331; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, p. 32; R. Forrest, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 85; Scott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 1. vi. 1, 2.—W. Hubbard, *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 296; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 23. vi. 1-10. —A. Short, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 376; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 347. vi. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 603; vol. xxiv., No. 1394; W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 114; R. A. Bertram, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 315; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 327; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 274. vi. 3.—A. M. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 220. vi. 5.—C. S. Horne, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 232. vi. 6.—C. J. Vaughan, *Words of Hope*, p. 113. vi. 7-10.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 31. vi. 9.—J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 114.

Chap. vi., vers. 9, 10.—"As unknown, and yet well known," etc.

A STRING of Paradoxes.

I. Note the first paradox of the text: "As unknown, and yet well known." The early disciples were a literally unknown and obscure set of persons, even the Apostles themselves being called from the most ordinary avocations of life. By far the greatest of their number, notwithstanding his natural and acquired ability, was sneered at by the world of his day. The world, as a whole, still misjudges and underrates the Church. The Apostle John's declaration is as true now as ever: "The world knoweth us not,"—unknown to the world, yet well known to the Church triumphant and to the angels of God. Our names are written, not on earth, but in heaven itself.

II. "As dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed." It is not our only life that the world sees; we have another, an inner, higher, diviner life, hid with Christ in God—a life of faith, a life of love, a life of hope, hope which, like an electric conductor, draws light from the very Throne of God, and tinges the dark death-cloud with the radiancy of the immortality beyond. And though this the earthly house of our

tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

III. Hear also the third paradox: "As sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing." When the little bird starts from the twig to breast the force of the storm, the wind as it meets it only tends to drive it higher and higher towards the sky. In like manner the storms of life, as the Christian faces them, do but force him higher and higher, until he reaches that calm elevation above the storm where the sun of Divine love and peace sheds its light and warmth upon his soul.

IV. "As poor, yet making many rich." Poor enough were the Apostles and their early followers, and significant is the fact that not poverty but wealth has been the Church's chiefest bane. But amidst present poverty, God's children have the power to scatter broadcast present wealth—the power to impart a knowledge of riches that wax not old.

V. "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things." A man may own a magnificent picture-gallery on earth, and yet, because of his lack of sympathy with painting, the poor man whom he permits to visit it, who has the mystic sympathy, may be the truest possessor of the pictures. Even so in reference to the Christian and the universe in which he lives: though legally he may have nothing, yet, being in harmony with the Spirit of the great Creator, he can trace His hand in every work; and whilst the wicked never acknowledge God in nature, he in reality, by sympathy and spiritual discernment, possesses all things.

J. W. ATKINSON, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 956.

REFERENCES: vi. 10.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 1; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 13th series, p. 101; W. Moffat, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 325; *Sermons for Boys and Girls*, p. 14; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 217. vi. 11.—*Ibid.*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 352.

Chap. vi., ver. 14.—"What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

COMMUNION with God.

I. We can require no proof that God and the wicked man cannot be said to have fellowship or communion, though God be about that wicked man's path and spieth out all his ways. There is no proposing of the same object or end, for God proposes His own glory, whereas the wicked man proposes the gratification of his own sinful propensities. To have fellowship, to have communion with God, what can this denote, if not that

human nature has been wondrously purged from its corruption, refined into something of affinity to the ethereal, and endowed with affections which find their counterpart objects in the Divine Being alone? You see at once the contradiction between the assertions—that a man is in fellowship with God and yet loves the present world—is eager for its wealth, addicted to its pleasures, or ambitious for its honours. The phraseology of our text implies a state of concord or friendship—a state, in fact, on man's part, of what we commonly understand by religion.

II. We cannot conceal from ourselves that there is a great deal of vague hope of heaven which takes little or no account of what must necessarily be the character of the inhabitants of heaven. It follows so naturally, with regard to earthly things, that we seek what we love, that there is very little difficulty, with regard to heavenly things, to draw from the fact of loving the inference that we must be in earnest as candidates for a kingdom of which we so readily recognise the worth and attractiveness. But we forget that in order to anything of happiness there must be a correspondence between the dispositions of the inhabitants of a world and the glories and enjoyments of that world. It is nothing that we have a relish for descriptions of heaven. The question is whether we have any conformity with the inhabitants of heaven.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2215.

REFERENCES: vi. 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 223; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 246. vi. 15.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 260. vi. 16.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 296; vol. iv., p. 588; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 85; F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 8; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 126: *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. x., p. 142. vi. 17.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 255. vi. 17, 18.—W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 4; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 115.

Chap. vii., ver. 1.—"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

CONSIDER:—

I. That part of the exhortation which requires the destruction of evil: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." (1) By filthiness is meant moral pollution of any kind. It denotes not exclusively or especially any particular sin, but sin as such—everything which renders the

character loathsome in God's sight. (2) The words "flesh and spirit" we understand as denoting the seat of the sin. Filthiness of the flesh we take to be sin in its outward manifestation; filthiness of the spirit, sin in its internal emotions. (3) The cleansing required extends to both. (4) The extent of the cleansing required is shown by the use of the word *all*. He who would taste Christianity's joys and reap her rewards must have no favourite sins. He must cleanse himself from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit. (5) The exhortation of the text shows us that, while God is the sanctifier of His people, there is an important sense in which we must sanctify ourselves.

II. That part of the exhortation which enjoins the cultivation of perfect holiness. Trusting in Christ for sanctification no less than for forgiveness is our first duty; for until we trust in Him and are united to Him by a living faith, no effort we may make in order to sanctify ourselves will be of any avail. The danger against which we need to be on our guard is that, instead of resting in Christ for sanctification, we should be persuading ourselves that we are sanctified, when it is only too manifest that we are resting, not in Christ, but in our own fancies about Christ—resting not for but without sanctification, and thereby jeopardising our own souls.

W. LANDELS, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 328.

REFERENCES: vii. 1.—R. W. Dale, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 81; F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 360. vii. 2-8.—*Ibid.*, p. 365. vii. 4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 265. vii. 6.—S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 213; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 51. vii. 9, 10.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 372; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 104.

Chap. vii., ver. 10.—"Godly sorrow worketh repentance," etc.

NOTICE:—

I. Godly sorrow: its nature and origin. (1) The nature of godly sorrow. In the immediate context it is directly contrasted with a commoner truth, the sorrow of the world. The sorrow of the world, though it seem a thick homogeneous covering over all human life, is yet made up of as many kinds as that carpet of green which covers the earth. Godly sorrow is like the rest, inasmuch as it is sorrow; it is unlike the rest, inasmuch as it springs, not out of the sufferer's connection with earth and time, but out of his connection with God and eternity. The expression clearly intimates that the attitude of the soul must be changed ere it can be sensible of this sorrow. Away from the world, with its hopes and fears,

the man must turn, and open his inmost being towards God. Godly sorrow is an affection which the carnal mind never knew. (2) Consider the cause of this sorrow: "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." The sorrow for sin was not felt until God's goodness aroused it; and that sorrow once aroused, instantly manifests true repentance in an eager effort to put sin away.

II. The repentance which godly sorrow produces. It is a change of mind which imparts a new direction to the whole life, as the turning of the helm changes the course of the ship. Two things are said in the text about this turning: (1) it is unto salvation; and (2) it is not to be repented of. The repentance which led unto salvation is the only repentance which the saved see in the memory of the past, and that repentance they will never repent.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 300.

REFERENCES: vii. 10.—A. Maclaren, *A Year's Ministry*, vol. ii., p. 113; C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons Chiefly Practical*, p. 65; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 331; *Ibid., Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 31; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 287; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 122.

Chap. vii., ver. 11.—"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you," etc.

MARKS of Godly Sorrow.

No sham work will suffice in religion. *Heart* work must be God's work. He who *made* the heart alone can change it from its natural hardness and stubbornness into one that is broken and contrite.

I. Godly sorrow is such a sorrow as God approves of, because it brings us to see the hatefulness of sin; because it has touched the heart and brought the offender back, in penitence, to his forgiving Father. Many a wounded and agonised conscience is like a sheet of ice shivered on the pavement, and which lies there stiff and cold; but let the sun burst forth in his might, and the frozen mass is melted. So, too, true godly sorrow is accompanied by the softening influences of the Holy Spirit, and brings forth fruit meet for repentance.

II. If we have really experienced this godly sorrow, it will assuredly have wrought in us great *carefulness* to seek an amendment of life: we shall feel ashamed and *indignant* with ourselves for our past misdoings; we shall cherish a wholesome *fear* of relapsing into evil ways; a *vehement desire* for pardon and sanctifying grace; a *zeal* for the honour of God and for the

advancement of His kingdom; and a *revenge*, as it were, against the sinful lusts that once caused us to offend. While Sir Christopher Wren was engaged in demolishing the ruins of old St. Paul's, London, in order to make room for the new and grander cathedral, he used a battering-ram, with which thirty men continued to beat upon a part of the wall for a whole day. Our prayers and repentances may seem like puny agencies for overturning the strongholds of sin within us, but God can and will render them effectual in the end.

J. N. NORTON, *Every Sunday*, p. 143.

REFERENCES: vii. 11-16.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 379. vii. 19.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 229. viii. 1-12.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 387. viii. 4.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 249. viii. 5.—T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 299; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 234.

Chap. viii., ver. 8.—"I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love."

AN Apostle pleading for Liberality in Giving.

If you will glance at the context, two things appear on the surface of it: first that St. Paul is very anxious to obtain a handsome contribution from the Church at Corinth; and secondly, that he is just a little doubtful about succeeding in his endeavour. When we find him dwelling on the subject for two whole chapters together, placing it in a variety of lights and making his appeal to every conceivable motive, the very accumulation of arguments inclines us to suspect that a great effort was required in order to evoke the generosity of the Corinthian Church. We do not usually waste our strength where there is no obstacle to be overcome. And there is some confirmation of this view in the fact that the Apostle declined to be indebted for his own personal maintenance, or for any part of it, to this particular Church. To some of his converts—to the Philippians, for instance—he was not too proud to be beholden. But from the Church at Corinth he would accept nothing, and the reason probably lay in the difference of temper and character between the two Christian communities.

I. Let us now see how St. Paul sets about accomplishing his object. He begins by informing the Corinthians of what the Churches of Macedonia had done in the matter. He does not hesitate for a moment to stimulate the sluggish benevolence of the wealthier Church by narrating to them what the poorer

Churches have done. He proposes an example of liberality worthy of imitation.

II. He points out that there ought to be a proportion maintained among what may be called the component parts of the Christian character. The inner and the outer should keep pace with each other. "See that ye abound in this grace also."

III. He disclaims all intention of exerting anything like compulsory power. There is in Christians a deep, underlying love to their Master, and love to those for whom their Master died; and if you can succeed in touching this spring—in setting this motive free to act—you have more than half accomplished what you are attempting to do.

IV. In the last place, the Apostle speaks of an equalisation in the material condition of Christian people. Inequality in the present condition of being enters into the Divine plan respecting the people of Christ. But it is the object of Christian benevolence to counteract this inequality as far as possible. The Corinthians had fulness, the Hebrew Christians had emptiness. It was the duty of the Corinthians, then, to restore the balance.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, new series, No. 840.

Chap. viii., ver. 9.—**"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."**

CHRIST'S Privations a Meditation for Christians.

I. What is meditating on Christ? it is simply this, thinking habitually and constantly of Him, and of His deeds and sufferings. Christ is gone away; He is not seen; we never saw Him, we only read and hear of Him. We must recall to mind what we read in the Gospels and in holy books about Him; we must bring before us what we have heard in church; we must pray God to enable us to do so, to bless the doing so, and to make us do so in a simple-minded, sincere, and reverential spirit. In a word, we must meditate, for all this is meditation, and this even the most unlearned person can do, and will do, if he has a will to do it.

II. Now of such meditation, or thinking over Christ's sufferings, I will say two things: (1) that such meditation is not at all pleasant at first; (2) it is only by slow degrees that meditation is able to soften our hard hearts, and that the history of Christ's trials and sorrows really moves us. It is not once thinking of Christ or twice thinking of Christ that will do it. It is by going on quietly and steadily, with the hought of Him in

our mind's eye, that by little and little we shall gain something of warmth, light, life, and love. We shall not perceive ourselves changing. It will be like the unfolding of the leaves in spring. You do not see them grow; you cannot, by watching, detect it. But every day, as it passes, has done something for them; and you are able, perhaps, every morning to say that they are more advanced than yesterday. So it is with our souls; not indeed every morning, but at certain periods we are able to see that we are more alive and religious than we were, though during the interval we were not conscious that we were advancing.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 39.

POVERTY a Holy State.

I. The poverty of Christ is intended as an example to all men. To His earliest followers He gave the precept of poverty; He made it binding on them; He made it even the condition of entering His service and His kingdom. Poverty, toil, and a common life were the daily bonds of their society with Him; and they chose to live on as He had left them, still realising His presence who, though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor. Out of this common life came the fixed endowments of the Church. First, the bishop and his clergy and the poor of Christ lived of one stock and revenue, as it were at one table, at which the spiritual father presided in Christ's stead. Afterwards, when the Church had peace, and in God's good providence was permitted to make itself fixed homes and certain dwelling-places, the necessity which lay on them by reason of the then present distress ceased. That which was a precept of necessity, became a counsel of perfection. It was a fuller and closer imitation of the life of Christ for those who, by the providence of God, were permitted to forsake all for the love of their heavenly Master. And there have been many, in all ages of the Church, who have willingly made themselves poor for Christ's sake, that through their poverty and labour of love the elect might be made rich in God's kingdom.

II. Another reason for Christ's choosing so bare and destitute a condition was, that He by His poverty might set us an example of deadness to the world. The gifts and allurements of the secular state are among the chief dangers of Christ's servants. There are very few that can resist the offers of wealth, ease, elevation, power, and the like. And Christ, foreseeing the trial of His Church, especially in the days when the world was to come into its fold, stamped for ever in His own

example the visible tokens of perfect deadness to the secular state, by choosing for Himself a life of poverty. This is another great lesson set us in the poverty of our Lord—so to die to the world that it cannot find the price at which to buy our submission. The man that covets nothing, seeks nothing, looks for nothing, nay, that would refuse and reject the solicitations of the world unless they bore on them some sure and expressive marks of the Master's hand, is above all worldly power. He is truly independent; out of the reach of hope and fear; and next under God, lord of his own spirit.

III. And once more, the example of the Son of God was no doubt designed to show us the relation between poverty and holiness. The very state of poverty is a wholesome corrective of many subtle and stubborn hindrances of our sanctification. Let us embrace it with gladness. Let us, when the choice is before us, choose it rather than to be rich. How much of mercy and meaning does this put into all worldly reverses. The loss of fortune is, as it were, a call to perfection; the appointment of a poor lot in life, or of a precarious livelihood, are tokens of His will to make us share in the likeness of His poverty. Let us bless Him for every degree of approach He permits us to make towards His perfect life. Whether we be in the sacred or the secular state, let us use the narrowing of worldly fortunes as a means of chastening our desires, and in making ourselves independent of all things but His truth, His Spirit, the laws of His Church, and the hope of His heavenly kingdom.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 284.

WHEN a beggar asks alms of me for the love of Christ, can I safely hold back my hand? When I am assured, by persons of wisdom and experience, that I shall do a positive wrong to society if I listen to his prayer, dare I give him anything? These are questions which are troubling a great many of us. They do not concern only the case of the street beggar. They have a very wide application. Some will tell us that almost every time we bestow anything on a fellow-creature we are indulging a fancy or a sentiment and violating a law. Some will say that the most indiscriminating kindness is most like the kindness of God, who giveth liberally to all and upbraideth not, who sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust. These opposite opinions do not only distract us. Too often they drive us to the conclusion that there is no principle at all which can guide us, or to the conclusion, more dangerous still,

that there are two principles, one of which is good for earth, the other for heaven. Perhaps there is no time when this conflict is likely to be greater in our minds than at Christmas.

I. It is certain that if we receive the incarnation of Christ as the revelation of God's mind and character to men, any language which has ever been used or can ever be used to denote the fulness and universality of the Divine love and compassion, instead of being exaggerated, instead of requiring to be modified and justified, must be tame and cold. So far then it would seem that the defenders of an expansive indiscriminating charity have much to urge on their behalf. If we are to be followers of God as dear children; if nothing can be wrong in our character which is like His, nothing right which is inconsistent with His,—there can be no fear of our regarding the race of man or any individual of that race with too much affection and sympathy; there must be the greatest fear of stinting of affection and sympathy.

II. Again, if we have not followed a cunningly devised fable in supposing that Christ, who was rich, for our sakes became poor, it cannot be a true maxim that men should generally be left to the consequences of their own acts, that we should turn away on the other side when we see one who has fallen into poverty or into crime, comforting ourselves with the thought that it was his own fault, and that we are not to save him from the results of his folly and recklessness. Our Lord drew no artificial distinctions between cures of the body and of the soul. He claimed to be the Lord of both; He proved Himself to be the Deliverer of both. His example, then, may fairly be pleaded by those who say that they are not bound in dispensing gifts and services to choose the meritorious, who remind us that if we had to prove our title to live, we must all be left to perish.

III. But there is another aspect of the Nativity which requires to be as seriously contemplated as either of those we have considered. Christ did not merely heal the sick and cast out devils. He called forth the true manhood in the poor degraded creatures to whom He came; He found the sheep that He had been seeking. It is clearly not good for any man that he should live as a mere animal, when God has intended him for a man. If by our alms we tempt him to be a miserable creature, sustained by chance bounty, selling his soul for pence, we are guilty of our brother's blood; we are not leading him to feel that he is a child of God; we may be keeping him from that new and high life which Christ took on flesh to vindicate for him.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 83.

THE Riches and Poverty of Christ.

I. The native riches of Christ. "He was rich." The first display of the riches of the Eternal Word was not in our nature, but in the things which He made. Creation presupposes Him as its origin, underlying ground, and sustaining presence. The history of the universe is but the record of the progressive display of His unsearchable riches. But whilst He is the presupposition of all things, without whom the universe were an unsolved and insoluble problem, He is also the prophecy of all things. All things look to, move towards, and only rest in Him. All that has hitherto been done forms, as it were, but the initial revelation of His wealth, its first opening up, the early prophecy of the great future to which the growing heavens of His fulness point and cry, "Respice finem!" The riches of our Lord will only be seen in the end.

II. The poverty He chose. "He was rich; He became poor." (1) The poverty of His nature. He who had life in Himself became dependent for life and breath and all things. His nature was subject to all the limitations of time and space, of human weakness and wants. (2) The poverty of His circumstances. He was born in poverty, in poverty He was brought up, and in poverty He lived and died. (3) His experience presents to us an inner life of poverty in keeping with the poverty of His nature and circumstances. He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In His mighty work He made the experience of all poverty.

III. The wealth of His poverty. This is seen (1) in its voluntariness, (2) in its vicariousness, (3) in its beneficence of purpose, and (4) in its fittingness for the communication of His riches. He who was rich became poor, was compassed with our infirmity, touched with our feeling, tempted in all points as we are, that we might find grace to help in every time of need, and that He might become our eternal salvation.

W. PULSFORD, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: viii. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 151; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 359; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 103; *Homilist*, vol. v., p. 346; F Ferguson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 48; H P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 252; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 11; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 173; A. M. Fairbairn, *The City of God*, p. 288; J. Oswald Dykes, *Sermons*, p. 151; Hewlett, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 309.

Chap. viii., ver. 11.—"Now, therefore, perform the doing of it."

PERFORMANCE. Consider:—

I. Promises in relation to the kingdom of heaven. Men do not like to lose sight of the beautiful city of God. They like to feel

some sort of connection with Christ; they mean to return to an earnest Divine life. Yes, there is a kind of purpose in their hearts to be as true to Christ as in their first days of consecration to His service, and they live, in a way, on the flattering tale. But let them come to the point of reality. Oh, the tragedy written in the lives of well-meaning persons! The promiser is still a slave, and still dwells in the enchanted palace of evil. *Now* is the accepted time; *now* is the day of salvation.

II. Promises in relation to the responsibilities of gifts and service. God is always saying to us, Begin; begin. Performance, once honestly commenced, tempts out more and more of loyal effort.

III. Promises in relation to the example of Christ. You vowed yourself in seasons of sickness and bereavement to Christ. Have you fulfilled that vow? It has been said that sometimes drowning men, who have been rescued at great peril to others, have thinned down their promised gratuity when time has been allowed to elapse. Miserable selfists! Yes, we can all say, Amen, to that. But how many might hear God's voice, "Now, therefore, perform the doing of it."

IV. Promises in relation to the bountifulness of God. What shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits towards us? The Saviour's life was a life of deeds, and we ought to be living epistles of Him.

V. Promises in relation to the influence of example. Actions, as of old, speak louder than words. A kind, stimulating word is of immense service when it is accompanied by courageous endeavour. We are afraid, some of us, to begin; but, although at first we tremble, the whispered words of Jesus will restore our courage, for He hath said, "I will never leave thee; I will never forsake thee."

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 312.

REFERENCES: viii. 12.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 544. viii. 15.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 395. viii. 21.—J. Taylor, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 186; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250; H. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 351. viii. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1522; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 191. ix. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 835; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 77.

Chap. ix., ver. 8.—"God is able to make all grace abound towards you."

THE All-ability of God.

I. God is able to make all grace abound. Then surely He is

able to rule the world He has created and still creates. He is the God of creation, and not its servant. He can get behind all the points that are visible to us, and without altering the order of nature, He can produce what change He desires. We may therefore ask Him to give us what we think would be good for us. This will be one of the practical results of the full belief in the all-ability of God. If I may not ask my daily bread from God, if I may not tell Him what I wish about the weather and what the country needs, then what may I speak to Him about? "About spiritual blessings," does any one say? Then are they not also given according to law? If God is bound to act invariably in the material sphere, He is equally and even more bound to act invariably in the spiritual sphere; and if we may not reasonably pray to Him as to the one, still less may we reasonably pray to Him about the other. It is God or no God. God is able to make all grace abound, to give blessing in every sphere, and will answer in some way every sincere prayer that is offered to Him.

II. Prayer is asking. It is not dictation. If it were, it would be liable to the objections which have been urged against it. It is telling the Father what we believe to be our real needs, leaving Him to judge what and how much to give and what to withhold. We may leave Him to maintain the laws. He will take care that there is no infringement of anything that ought to be observed, and that no injustice is done to some by answering the prayer of others; He will be true and faithful to Himself and to His great perfections; He will be attentive and compassionate to every child who speaks to Him; He will be the Hearer and Answerer of prayer to the end.

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 252.

REFERENCE: ix. 11.—R. Maguire, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 236.

Chap. ix., ver. 15.—"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

IN order to arrive at the full meaning of the words "His unspeakable gift" we should inquire what it is, of all the blessings of redemption by Christ, that most perfectly answers to this description, that is so full, so inexhaustible, as best to satisfy this epithet "unspeakable," far beyond our words to describe and our powers to grasp by their conceptions, that is most entirely and properly God's gift—His one great bestowal over and above all others. And I hesitate not to say at once, it is God's gift of the Holy Spirit. Consider how the Spirit is properly and finally the gift of God.

I. A guardian angel might dwell with the believer—and such, we hold, do dwell with us, and minister around us—but a guardian angel can never dwell in the believer, can never be to him an indweller and enlightener, an inseparable friend and comforter, a mighty advocate and unfailing champion. Go then even to the throne of the Godhead, and ask who shall do this. The Father dwelleth in light inaccessible; Him no man hath seen, nor can see; He ruleth all things after the counsel of His own will. The Son is gone up from us, and is waiting in our manhood at the right hand of the Father, till all things be put under His feet. Where then shall we find this ever-present help in God? where but in the Holy Spirit, whose especial glory it is that He works and energises in creation, in the material and the immaterial ranks of being, who first brought light out of darkness, who is the Source and Upholder of all life and joy?

II. Very various and very wonderful are the ways in which God's Spirit originates and carries on the new life in men. One man speaks with the Spirit in the lofty cathedral, resonant with studied praise; and another comes from his week-long toil to the mean and crowded conventicle, and in the illiterate accents of his brother-mechanic the same blessed Spirit speaks to his heart, in his heart's own way, and he too hears and follows. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift. For wherever He is found, however He works, He is this one crowning gift of our God, without which no man can live unto Him, with whom we have Christ in all His fulness, and the Father in all His love.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 274.

REFERENCES: ix. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1550. x. 1.—H. Wonnacott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 138; A. Rowland, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 282; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 54. x. 3-5.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 216; R. Whittington, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 203. x. 4.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 132; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 381. x. 4, 5.—*Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 32; W. J. Woods, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 282; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 378.

Chap. x., ver. 5.—"Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

I. THE power of thought. The ability to think is (1) man's great distinction, (2) the instrument of all his work, and (3) the great material with which he works.

II. For our thoughts to possess true value, we must learn to lead them. If a man does not lead his thoughts, some other power will, some power of the world, of the flesh, or of the devil, or all these powers combined. Now the central character of the power of our thoughts makes it a first necessity that we should lead them, if we are to remain in possession of ourselves. Thought determines the man. It arrests the attention, awakens feeling, inflames the passions, subdues the will, and commands action. Thoughts, therefore, unled, will be to a man what winds and waves are to a ship under canvas but without a rudder, or what steam is to an engine without the guiding rail: a driving and destructive power.

III. But if we would lead our thoughts, we must know how to make them interesting. Thoughts wedded to the affections and carried in the congenial currents of the heart so rapidly multiply associations that the difficulty is to abstain from thinking, for thought is captivated, and captivated thought must be active.

IV. But how may we lead our thoughts into captivity? To lead our thoughts we must present to the mind that which is agreeable to its nature, and simply ask for obedience to an authority which, though it speaks without, appeals to its own Amen within us. The authority is (1) conscience; (2) the Divine word; (3) He who speaks in the word.

W. PULSFORD, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 24.

SUBJECTION of the Reason and Feelings to the Revealed Word.

The question may be asked, How is it possible to live as if the coming of Christ were not far off, when our reason tells us that it probably is distant? It may be said that we cannot hope and fear, and expect and wait, as we will, but that we must have reasons for so doing; and that if we are persuaded in our deliberate judgment that Christ's coming is not probable, we cannot make ourselves feel as if it were probable. In considering this objection, I have an opportunity of stating a great principle which obtains in Christian duty: the subjection of the whole mind to the law of God.

I. I deny, then, that our feelings and likings are commonly moved according to the dictates of what we commonly mean by reason, so far from it that nothing is more common, on the other hand, than to say that reason goes one way and our wishes another. There is nothing impossible, then, in learning to look out for the day of Christ's coming more earnestly than

according to its probability in the judgment of reason. What Almighty God requires of us is to do that in one instance for His sake which we do so commonly in indulgence of our own waywardness and weakness, to hope, fear, expect our Lord's coming, more than reason warrants and in a way which His word alone warrants; that is, to trust Him above our reason.

II. Only reflect, what is faith itself but an acceptance of things unseen, from the love of them, beyond the determinations of calculation and experience? Faith outstrips argument. If there is only a fair chance that the Bible is true, that heaven is the reward of obedience and hell of wilful sin, it is worth while, it is safe, to sacrifice this world to the next. It were worth while, though Christ told us to sell all that we have and follow Him and to pass our time here in poverty and contempt—it were worth while on that chance to do it. Faith does not regard degrees of evidence. Though it is quite certain that Almighty God might have given us greater evidence than we possess, than we have in the Bible, yet, since He has given us enough, faith does not ask for more, but is satisfied and acts upon what is enough, whereas unbelief is ever asking for signs, more and greater, before it will yield to the Divine word. What is true of faith is true of hope. We may be commanded, if so be, to hope against hope, or to expect Christ's coming, in a certain sense, against reason

III. As it is our duty to bring some things before our minds and contemplate them much more vividly than reason by itself would bid us, so, again, there are other things which it is a duty to put away from us, not to dwell upon and not to realise, though they be brought before us. Judging by mere worldly reason, the Christian ought to be self-conceited, for he is gifted; he ought to understand evil, because he sees and speaks of it; he ought to feel resentment, because he is conscious of being injured; he ought to be doubting and hesitating in his faith, because his evidence for it might be greater than it is; he ought to have no expectation of Christ's coming, because Christ has delayed so long; but not so: his mind and heart are formed on a different mould. He goes by a law which others know not, not his own wisdom or judgment, but by Christ's wisdom and the judgment of the Spirit, which is imparted to him. This it is which gives so unearthly a character to his whole life and conversation, which is "hid with Christ in God."

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 255.

REFERENCES: x. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1473. x. 7.

—Bishop Temple, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 237. xi. 1-3. —F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 418; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 223.

Chap. xi., ver. 3.—"The simplicity that is in Christ."

I. THERE is simplicity in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness, as the Servant of the Father, as the Substitute, Surety, and Saviour of the guilty.

II. As in His own finished work of righteousness and atonement, so in the free offer of the Gospel as connected with it, we may see, and seeing bless God for, the simplicity that is in Christ. How simple, in every view of it, is the Gospel message. God has but one argument: the argument of the Cross, a full atonement made for guilt of deepest dye, an everlasting righteousness brought in, a sufficient satisfaction made to the righteous law, and a welcome, without upbraiding and without reserve, awaiting the very chief of sinners.

III. As there is the simplicity of actual reality in the great atonement and the simplicity of earnest sincerity in the Gospel offer, so in respect also of the completeness of believers as one with Jesus we may note the simplicity that is in Christ. The perfection of His righteousness, the fulness of His grace and truth, the holiness of His Divine nature, all His possessions, in short, and all the pure elements of His own inmost satisfaction, His rest, His peace, His joy, all, all, He shares with us simply, bountifully, unreservedly, and all upon the same footing: our only being in Him and abiding in Him.

IV. The same simplicity is apparent in His guidance of us as our Captain and Example.

V. The simplicity that is in Christ may be noted in connection with His second coming and glorious appearing. What really is to produce the right moral and spiritual effect upon our souls is not the crowded canvas and scenery of a picture embracing all the particulars of a world's catastrophe, no, not that, not that at all, but the one dread and holy image of Jesus as He was taken up to heaven from Mount Olivet, so coming again even as He was seen to go. Be that coming when it may, it is still as the polestar of the Church's hope and the spur of her zeal, simple, solemn, in its very standing alone, isolated, solitary, separate, and apart from all accessories of preceding and accompanying revolution.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p. 43.

THE Simplicity that is in Christ.

I. This simplicity of Christ is most markedly set before us in our holy religion. First, in its doctrine. All doctrine is derived from Christ Himself; and if we go up to the fountain-head, there we see that, while never man spake like this Man, that which characterised Christ, like nature itself, most of all was His simplicity. It is true that He often spoke deep and profound things, and that, as in all Scripture, so we have from the lips of Christ Himself heights which no man can reach, depths which no man can fathom, lengths which no man can span, and breadths which no mind or intellect can grasp; yet this arises from the infinitude of the subject more than from any lack of simplicity in Him who expounded it.

II. Again, secondly, this simplicity applies to obedience. Philosophy was so intricate and so subtle that very few could follow it, and very few could understand it; but when God, by His Son Jesus Christ, would teach the world the most royal law of greatness and obedience, it was this: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and thy neighbour as thyself."

III. This subject speaks to us of simplicity in our worship. Man loves novelty; man loves novelty in everything, and not less in his religion than in any other thing. This is the reason why the mind of man is ever open to some new form of faith or some new form of error, just for this reason, and we are here recalled from it all by the simplicity which is in Christ. Be simple in everything: simple in your repentance toward God; simple in your faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ; simple in your mutual intercourse with one another; simple in all the work that you are honoured and permitted to put your hand to for the Lord in His vineyard.

J. FLEMING, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 28.

Chap. xi., ver. 19.—"Ye suffer fools gladly, seeing ye yourselves are wise."

FANCIED Wisdom.

I. The influence exercised by the Judaising teachers at Corinth was so noxious that the Apostle found himself most unwillingly driven to the ungracious task of boasting of his services. Such a necessity must have been peculiarly repulsive to him, because a great part of his own special teaching was directed against any self-complacency or assertion of personal merit. He introduces it, therefore, with reluctance and apology.

Such boasting, he says, becomes a fool rather than an Apostle, but the perversity of the Corinthians has left him no alternative, and he feels obliged to give them a picture of the man whom they are deserting for their new and unworthy favourites.

II. (1) The text accounts for certain forms of unbelief. There is a certain pleasure in appearing cleverer or more profound than our neighbours or feeling able to despise them as the bigoted votaries of a worn-out creed and lingerers behind the age. Thus we are led by our own fancied wisdom to suffer fools gladly. (2) The fancied wisdom which leads us to suffer fools gladly may be, not of an intellectual, but of a religious, character. The man gladly tolerates the groundless fancies of some new teacher who casually crosses his path, or perhaps himself seeks one out; he adopts in his ignorance untenable interpretations of Scripture. Thus he too suffers fools gladly.

III. If any one is disposed to lament the licence of modern criticism, the hundred forms of modern sectarianism, the readiness with which men are carried about with divers and strange doctrines, the perils to which their faith is exposed, let him consider whether his own conduct is such as to strengthen or weaken that faith. Remember that every Christian, whether qualified or not to solve Scriptural difficulties and answer sceptical arguments, is able in this way to prove the truth of Christian doctrine by the beauty of Christian life.

G. E. L. COTTON, *Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. i., p. 180.

REFERENCES: xi. 13, 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 81. xi. 19.—W. C. E. Newbolt, *Counsels of Faith and Practice*, p. 238. xi. 22.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 158. xi. 23.—F. W. Aveling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 100. xi. 24.—A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Manchester*, p. 14; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 56. xi. 26.—Talmage, *Old Wells Dug Out*, p. 26; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 224; A. Rees, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 243. xi. 30.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89. xi. 32, 33.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 540.

Chap. xii., ver. 1.—"I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord."

VISIONS and Revelations.

The words carry us at once to an age of miracle. They place us in the midst of a time when the eye and the ear were each occasionally opened to sights and sounds not of this earth, when the ordinary perceptions were in abeyance, and the soul, if it did not, as some have thought, actually abandon the body, was the subject of impressions not resulting from

terrestrial objects, but stamped upon its consciousness by a preternatural exercise of power. Such probably was the condition in which Ezekiel saw the dry bones in the valley become instinct with fresh life. And so with the event in St. Paul's career to which the text refers. The Apostle's authority had been studiously depreciated by some of his converts, and he would vindicate himself from their derogatory insinuations. He would not dwell upon what he had done, but upon those things rather which God had done to him. "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory in my own sufferings; I will pass to what testifies to my apostleship, but involves no idea of personal merit. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord."

I. The more we contemplate the portrait of St. Paul as depicted in the New Testament, the more, I think, we are driven back upon the inquiry, What was the source of that life of stupendous toil and faith and suffering? (1) You must give sufficient importance to his own personal sight of the face of Jesus Christ. In St. Luke's narrative of St. Paul's conversion we are told only that he heard a voice; but, as St. Paul himself twenty-eight years after relates the event, Christ appeared unto him. Now we know something from the Gospel narratives of the power of the sight of Jesus Christ. Yet Jesus was only as a Man among men. Who can measure therefore the power of the vision of His face seen through the splendour of the Shechinah of His presence? (2) The second source of St. Paul's energy and self-devotion we take to have been that recorded in the text. "I knew a man," he writes, "about fourteen years ago, caught up by the power of Christ to the third heaven; I knew such a man," he adds, "caught up into paradise who heard unspeakable words which it is not possible to utter." Here lay one main secret of St. Paul's intense unquenchable zeal: the vision of the face of Jesus Christ, the vision of the eternal world. Out of that double vision grew an unequalled love, an irresistible desire unto God, a disregard of earthly suffering; out of these revelations grew one overmastering passion to spend and be spent for Christ here, to be with Christ for ever hereafter.

II. We may hence gather the cause of our own comparative coldness, our own shrinking from the least cross, our own aversion to self-sacrifice and self-denial. The explanation of it all lies in the vagueness of our spiritual perceptions. There can be no vigorous, strong, masculine Christianity without a distinct vision of the everlasting. Heaven cannot grow dim and minute

without earth waxing larger to the eye. We must have a clear vision of the King in His beauty and of the land that is very far off.

J. R. WOODFORD, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 702.

REFERENCES: xii. 2.—J. Thain Davidson, *The City Youth*, p. 199. xii. 2, 3.—Brookfield, *Sermons*, p. 13.

Chap. xii., vers. 2-4

ST. PAUL'S Vision of Paradise.

I. It is not difficult to conceive the impossibility of conveying any adequate impression of the component elements of heaven to minds encumbered with the grossness of mortal nature, an impossibility resembling that of communicating problems of astronomy to a cradled infant, of describing the combination of colours in a sunset to one born blind, or of imparting to the deaf the enchantment of harmony. But while the words might consistently be rendered "impossible to utter," it would seem, from the entire suppression of any attempt to describe what he had seen and heard, and from the obvious reserve maintained in Scripture upon the precise nature of the heavenly blessedness, and from the studiously figurative language in which it is always removed, as it were, beyond the reach of close and irreverent investigation—from all these considerations it would seem that it was not only difficult, but inexpedient, to blazon these celestial secrets.

II. So far from conjectures about heaven being discouraged by this reserve in Scripture and this emblematic way of painting it, does it not rather go to encourage conjecture by not tying us down to one limited and defined notion? There can be no better proof of the attractiveness, the blessedness, of what St. Paul witnessed, than the abiding effect it had upon himself. He had garnered up in his heart the ecstatic secret, as a mother garners up in her heart the memory of a departed child. Always and everywhere that vision haunted him. His soul was not distracted, but stimulated, by the never-ceasing desire to recover the rapturous privilege which for a mysterious moment had been in his possession. Piety, a perpetual sense of relation to God and to another state of being; charity, a perpetual sense of relation to men in this present world; hard labour, the outcome of both—these were the most prominent characteristics of his life. The manly, cheerful, humble cultivation of these virtues would go very far towards gaining for us that heavenly-

mindedness which is the nearest approach to St. Paul's singular privilege of which, perhaps, we are at present capable.

W. H. BROOKFIELD, *Sermons*, p. 13.

REFERENCES: xii. 4.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 404. xii. 5.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 162.

Chap. xii., ver. 7.

THE Gospel of the Body.

A good life of St. Paul would be the best possible exponent of Christian experience. I do not mean an external biography—for that we have—but a full transcript of his thoughts and feelings. But we have this in a greater degree than we suppose. These epistles of his are not theological treatises, but genuine letters from one man to other men, full of personal feeling and experience, and not impersonal generalisations of truth; they show how the man Paul took in the Gospel, and how it worked in and through him.

I. This experience of the thorn in the flesh is both interesting and valuable, or would be, if we could come at it. But it has been buried under such a mass of comment and conjecture that the simple lessons it contains are hard to reach. The main object seems to have been to discover what the secret nature of the thorn was. The strife is typical of much study of the Bible—infinite scrutiny of the form without much thought of the end. Now it matters little what the thorn in the flesh was; but how it pierced the Apostle, how he bore it, and how it affected him are the real questions. If the real significance of the thorn in the flesh were put in a general way, it would be physical evil a condition of spiritual strength.

II. Consider the moral effect of bodily infirmity. It cuts up our conceit and pride. It wrought in this way in St. Paul. Nothing strikes such a blow at self as an experience of physical infirmity or suffering. Pain is a great humbler, weakness a still greater. Bodily infirmity teaches a man to go carefully in this world of mischance, this world from which chaos is not yet wholly expunged; it co-ordinates him to an uncertain world. Physical infirmity reveals to a man the fact that he is not himself a source of power and the more general truth that the power of the world is outside of him; in other words, it teaches him that he is a dependent being.

III. An experience of physical infirmity gives one a certain wholesome contempt of material things. We have hardly any more imperative command than to secure for the body its highest

possible vigour and health; the gospel of the body is yet to be heard and heeded, but this gospel will go no further than to require such care and treatment of the body that it shall best serve the uses of the mind. It is worthy of the greatest care, but only that it may be the most supple and ready servant of our real self. I will think well of the body, but not too well. Hence this experience of physical weakness and infirmity is left in order to help us keep a due balance between flesh and spirit. There are great advantages in not being allowed to feel at home in the body. An animal life antagonises a moral life. When we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. Man does not live by bread alone. Hunger may feed him; blindness may give him light; pain may bring peace; the weakness of the body may be the strength of the spirit. For all this finite order and encasement is a minister to the life which is eternal.

T. T. MUNGER, *The Appeal to Life*, p. 87.

REFERENCES: xii. 7.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 213; G Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, p. 60.

Chap. xii., vers. 7-9.

THE Thorn in the Flesh.

I. The first lesson which is suggested by these words is this: that the thorn in the flesh comes for a specific end. Of course it does not come by chance; nothing does. It comes by God's appointment or permission. But more than this, God does not send it out of mere wilfulness or caprice; He sends it for a certain purpose, and a purpose which we may in many cases find out. Let us look at St. Paul's case. I believe that to many an earnest-minded man the thorn in the flesh or the crook in the lot never comes in a form so painful as the form in which it came to Paul: the form of something which diminishes or destroys his usefulness, that keeps him from serving as he would his generation and his Saviour, that constrains noble powers or the makings of noble powers to rust sadly and uselessly away. St. Paul's thorn was given lest he should be exalted above measure.

II. It is beautiful, it is touching, it brings the tear to the eye, to hear St. Paul telling himself about his thorn in the flesh, and how much he needed it to keep him down, and how humbly he desired to submit to God's heavy hand. But think how differently we should have felt if anybody else had said the same things about Paul. There is all the difference in the

world between talking as Paul does in the text about ourselves and about any one else. When trial comes to ourselves let us humbly try to find out the lesson God is teaching us by it; but let us not presume to say why the trial has come to any other man.

III. See what the Apostle did about his thorn in the flesh. See what God did. Every day, I doubt not, when the thorn was first sent would the earnest supplication go up from his heart that this heavy burden might be taken from him; and who shall say that his prayer was not answered, nobly, fully, sublimely answered? There are two ways of helping a man burdened with what he has to do or bear. The one is to give him less to do or bear, to take the burden off the back; the other way is to strengthen him to do or bear all that is sent to him, to strengthen the back to bear the burden. In brief, you may give less work, or you may give more strength. And it was in this way, which even we can see is the better and nobler way, that the wise and almighty Saviour thought it best to answer His servant's prayer. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." And we do not need to go far for proof how completely each promise was fulfilled. How thoroughly resigned Paul was; how sanctified to him must that thorn have been; how strengthened his heart must have been with an unearthly strength when he could honestly write such words as follow his account of his Redeemer's promise. The thorn was there, piercing as deep as ever, marring his usefulness, making him seem weak and contemptible to the stranger; but he liked to have to feel from hour to hour that he must be always going anew to God for help, and so he wrote, not perhaps without a natural tear, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me."

A. K. H. B., *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, p. 34.

REFERENCES: xii. 7-9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1084; E. J. Hardy, *Faint yet Pursuing*, p. 39; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 149; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 234.

Chap. xii., vers. 8, 9.

STRENGTH in Weakness.

I. We have here the instinctive shrinking from that which tortured the flesh, which takes refuge in prayer.

II. We have, next, the insight into the source of strength for, and the purpose of, the thorn that could not be taken away.

III. Lastly, there is the calm final acquiescence in the loving necessity of continued sorrow.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 159.

REFERENCE: xii. 8-10.—F. W. Robertson, *Lectures on Corinthians*, p. 446.

Chap. xii., ver. 9.—"He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

THE Quietness of True Power.

Paul speaks in these verses of his own weakness and his thorn in the flesh. He says that he glories in his infirmity, and that in his weakness God had manifested His strength, as though he had been the empty channel which God filled. He teaches us in these words a lesson which we have great need to learn, and it is the quietness of true power.

I. All true power is constructive power. What is the power of Christ? To renew men's lives; to give the new heart; to produce new virtues. The destructive ministry even of evil is not necessarily a constructive ministry of good. You may destroy evil habits; you cannot give a new heart.

II. Quiet power is a wise power. Everything depends upon adaptation. A sentence may save a soul; a word fitly spoken may never be forgotten. That is always true power, the quiet word, the quiet manner, the spirit that knows that atmosphere is everything.

III. Quiet power is a beautiful power. There is a power that we must obey, but there is no beauty in it, nothing attractive in it. But there is another power that is beautiful. Such a power is that which we exercise at home. The sceptre is full of jewels that are rich in loveliness, held in a mother's hand.

IV. Quiet power is a Christlike power. We read again and again in the New Testament that all power is given to Christ. Yet it seems to me as if the light broke upon the world without men knowing it. When Christ was there, everything began to change; the atmosphere changed. So it is with the Christian man: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength."

V. Quiet power is lasting. It is so in all the aspects of life—in the prophetic or in the warning and reproving aspect.

VI. Quiet power is a terrible power.

VII. Quiet power is the Spirit's power: "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 99.

I. "My grace is sufficient for thee." With his infirmity hindering him, the great Apostle was to go forth among the Gentiles. Day by day there was to be in him this inward struggle. Christ said to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee. Thou mayest fail, but it shall never fail. By suffering thou shalt be raised, and taught, and purified. Fear not, then: My grace is sufficient for thee. I know thee, I know thy trials, I know Myself, better than thou canst."

II. But we must not for a moment limit our thoughts of His dealings with us to any such purpose as this: merely to compensate us for trials, merely to hold us up through our way, merely to minister to us grace sufficient for us. God has not put the meanest Christian into His world and into His Church only to be held up, only to be rescued from falling, only to escape the wrath to come; but He has put every one of us here to serve and glorify Him, to contribute an active share to the great testimony which shall rise, and is ever rising, to Him, to His faithfulness, His purity, His righteousness, His glory, as from all His works, so in the highest and noblest degree from His Church, the highest and noblest of His works. "My grace is sufficient to enable thee for the work which I have set thee to do, sufficient to enable thee, in spite of the trial, yes and by means of the trial, to bring forth fruit to My glory." "My strength is made perfect in weakness." It is His purpose with all His people that they should work for Him in life and life's duties, not in their own strength, but in His; that their bearing up in their lifelong conflict and then issuing forth into glorious victory should be seen and felt at every step to be not of themselves, but of Him. And for this purpose it is that He sends to them hindrances, trials, infirmities, thorns in their way, that their own pride, and strength, and stoutness of heart, and firmness of resolve may be broken down, that they may not walk in a light of their own kindling and congratulate themselves on the brightness of their path, but may toil through darkness and disappointment, through briers and through tears, to the sunshine of the everlasting hills, where the Sun of righteousness may light them to the work of life.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 211.

Chap. xii., ver. 9.—"My grace is sufficient for thee."

I. AFTER the fervours of the first love are abated, and after the sweet freshness has passed from the actings and strivings of the new-born soul, there often comes a coldness and a pause.

The young soul, new to the ways of grace, does not understand, is bewildered, discouraged, in danger of falling into a practical unbelief. But the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Your gospel is not any past experience nor any grand deliverance once for all. It is a present potency which will control all other powers, a present wisdom which will make a path of safety through all perplexities, a present love which will enfold and shelter you even if you stand amid a thousand griefs and fears.

II. A little farther on we meet with one whose beginning has long gone by. You had a calm and blissful time then; but now there has come a chilling and weakening change—in your present mood it may seem almost a desolating change. The quickest and best way of recovery is the way of the text. The Lord is saying to you also, "My grace is sufficient for thee." Take hold of that, and you are safe. Keep fast hold of that, acting in everything like one who believes it true, and ere long the health and joy of other days will come back, and the roots of your faith will grip the soil again.

III. The softening shadow of the text will come over the soul that is in trouble. Let every sufferer, whether by the body, or the mind, or the circumstances, hear for himself and gauge all his trouble while he hears; then let him apply the sure word of promise to its lengths, and breadths, and depths, and heights; then let him carry it home to the aged, the sick, the feeble, and to all whom it may concern, as the word of a God who cannot lie, as the assurance of a Saviour who cannot but pity and help, as the title to a legacy of which they are all made heirs, if they will only claim and inherit, as a shelter for every path, an assuagement for every sorrow, a sweet soul-secret for life and for death to every trusting soul, however troubled: "My grace is sufficient for thee."

A. Raleigh, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 201.

References: xii. 9.—J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 13; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxii., No. 1287; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 309; G. Calthrop, *Pulpit Recollections*, p. 162; A. Reed, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 489; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 337; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 350; Obbard, *Plain Sermons*, p. 164; A. Macleod, *Days of Heaven upon Earth*, p. 78; S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 108.

Chap. xii., ver. 10.—"When I am weak, then am I strong."

Strength in Weakness.

I. What was it that caused the heart of St. Paul to overflow

in this now familiar paradox? It was some special personal temptation of a very painful kind, which he calls a thorn in the flesh. He was attacked by some kind of trial so severe that he speaks of it as a messenger of Satan, and besought the Lord not once, but thrice, that it might depart from him. His prayer was answered, though in a different manner from that which he anticipated. It was answered in substance. His infirmity remained, but he was taught that, so far from being the weaker for it, he might become the stronger; and still more, the power of the Master would "come out," as we say, all the more prominently in consequence of the weakness of His servant. The more painful and obvious the deficiencies under which St. Paul might labour personally, the more clear it would become that any triumphs achieved by him were due, not to himself, but to Christ. His weakness, as we may express it, would be a foil to Christ's strength.

II. It is indeed a universal law that strength is made perfect in weakness; that strength is brought out into strongest relief when it appears in a naturally weak agent. The law has infinite illustrations, and they are very beautiful. For instance, the most timid bird will show courage when its young ones are threatened with danger Here it is the instinct of parental affection which brings strength out of weakness. And, to take a higher illustration, what is more interesting than to mark how many of the greatest commanders in war, by land and sea, have been men whose constitution seemed always on the point of breaking down? Here it is patriotism or professional pride which makes strength perfect in weakness; but when we come to spiritual dangers and conflicts, there really is no power in heaven or in earth that can give us permanently the victory but the power of Christ from above working in us here below. We must come to feel that Christ is absolutely essential to us; that at the foot of His cross and the foot of His throne in heaven is the only strength which can carry any one of us through life on earth to life in heaven.

H. M. BUTLER, *Harrow Sermons*, p. 365.

STRENGTH out of Weakness.

The true position of the Church of God in the world is that of weakness, and it is through this very weakness that she manifests her power. When the Christian is most sensible of his own weakness and most distrustful of his own strength,

then the power of Christ rests upon him. The Saviour fills none but the hungry, and strengthens none but the weak.

I. A sense of weakness has a natural tendency to make us strong, because it puts us on our guard against temptation. We are never more in danger of falling into the snares of the devil than when we flatter ourselves that we are most secure.

II. A sense of weakness is calculated to give us strength, because it obliges us to lean upon the Saviour. Self dependence is a broken reed. It may serve a good turn, perhaps, when no great pressure is to be sustained, but when trials and afflictions come, with their crushing weight, we must have underneath us the everlasting arms. The more we let go confidence in ourselves, the more abundant help shall we receive from God.

III. A sense of weakness has a natural tendency to make us strong by rendering us earnest and persevering in prayer. When good old Bishop Latimer was describing the way in which his father trained him as a yeoman's son, he said, "I had my bows bought me according to my age and strength: as I increased in them, so my bows were made bigger and bigger." Thus boys grow into crossbow-men, and, by a like increase in the weight of their trials, Christians become veterans in the hosts of the Lord.

J. N. NORTON, *Every Sunday*, p. 385.

STRENGTH in Weakness.

God's answer to Paul's prayer lays down a general law. God does not merely promise to perfect Paul's strength in that particular weakness: He states the general truth, a truth not peculiar to the spiritual life, though appearing there in its noblest aspect, that strength is perfected in weakness.

I. Strength perfected in weakness. We know that the converse is true: that weakness is perfected in strength; for both our reading and our experience show us that the greatest manifestations of weakness are constantly seen in those whom the world deems the strongest. On the other hand, illustrations are equally abundant of strength perfected in weakness. They are all about us in our ordinary life. The consciousness of infirmity often makes its subject so cautious, and puts him under such careful discipline, that he accomplishes more than another who is free from infirmity.

II. Look at the truth on its religious side. Then it comes into even stronger relief, because in the Christian economy weakness is assumed to be an universal condition, and dependence

is therefore the universal law of the Christian life. There it is invariably true that real strength comes only out of that weakness which, distrustful of itself, gives itself up to God. There it is invariably true that God's strength shines through human infirmity, and often selects for its best and richest expressions the poorest, weakest, most burdened, of mankind.

III. In the text there is no encouragement to cherish weakness. Weakness is not commended as a good thing in itself. The object of Christian training is to make men strong; and the Psalmist tells us that God's children go from strength to strength. But weakness is a universal fact in human nature. Our Lord covers all humanity with the statement that the flesh is weak, and the text does tell us to recognise the fact and to provide against it by taking Another's strength. The thing which it does commend is the permission of conscious weakness to have Another's strength push up through itself and pervade and transform it, a

> "Holy strength whose ground
> Is in the heavenly land."

M. R. VINCENT, *The Covenant of Peace*, p. 96.

REFERENCES: xii. 10.—P. T. Forsyth, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xiii., p 85; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 7. xii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1458; J. H. Newman, *Sermons on Subjects of the Day*, p. 14.

Chap. xii., ver. 14.—"For I seek not yours, but you."

THE Property Right we are to get in Souls.

I. God evidently means to make every community valuable to every other, and so far at least every man to every other. We see this on a magnificent scale in the articles of commerce. Here we find the nations all at work for each other in so many different climes and localities, preparing one for another articles of comfort, sustenance, and ornament, and then commerce, intervening, makes the exchanges, so that every people is receiving back to itself supplies that the whole human race, we may almost say, has been at work as producers to contribute.

II. Let us look a little into this matter of property and see how it comes. We get a property in things by putting our industry into them by ways of use, culture, and improvement. This makes our title, and then the ownership is bought or sold as by title. Just so when a Christian benefactor enters good into a soul: when he takes it away from the wildness and

disorder of nature by the prayers and faithful labours he expends upon it, the necessary result is that he gets a property in it, feels it to be his, values it as being his. And how great and blessed a property it is to have, we can only see by a careful computation of the values by which he measures it. (1) First, as he has come to look himself on the eternal in everything, he has a clear perception of souls as being the most real of all existences—more real than lands and gold and a vastly higher property, because they are eternal, and the title, once gained, is only consummated by death, not taken away. (2) Next, finding this or that human spirit or soul in a condition of darkness and disease and fatal damage, he begins forthwith to find an object in it and an inspiring hope to be realised in its necessity. He takes it thus upon himself, draws near to it, hovers round it in love and prayer and gracious words, and more gracious example, to regain it to truth and to God. (3) Then, again, as we get a property in other men by the power we exert in them, how much greater the property obtained by that kind of power which is supernaturally, transformingly beneficent, that which subdues enmity, illuminates darkness, fructifies sterility, changes discord to harmony, war to peace, and raises a spirit to be a temple of God's indwelling life. (4) Furthermore, when one has gained another to God and a holy life, there is a most dear, everlasting relationship established between them, one leading, so to speak, the other towards eternity, and the other beholding in him the benefactor by whose work and example he is consciously exalted for ever, and this gracious relationship will give them an eternally mutual property in each other. (5) The salvation of men is thus seen to be a work that ought to engage every Christian, and a work that, to be fitly done, must be heartily and energetically done.

H. BUSHNELL, *Sermons on Living Subjects*, p. 148.

REFERENCE: xii. 15.—J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 259.

Chap. xiii., ver. 1.—"In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."

THE Gospel Witnesses.

Consider some points of agreement between St. Paul and St. James.

I. Take the New Testament as we have received it. Admitting that there were two principles at work in the development

of the Christian Church, they are inextricably united as regards the documents of faith. Consider the Epistle to the Hebrews, which would be sufficient evidence, if there were no other, of the identity of St. Paul's doctrine with St. James's. Be as disputatious as you like about its author; still it comes at least from the school of St. Paul, if not from that Apostle himself. Now look through it from beginning to end, observe well its exhortations to obedience, its warnings against apostasy, its solemn announcement of the terrors of the Gospel, and further its honourable treatment of the Jewish law, which it sets forth as fulfilled, not disrespectfully superseded, by the Gospel, and then say whether this Epistle alone be not a wonderful monument of the essential unity of the Gospel creed among all its original disseminators.

II. In the case of the original Apostles the intention of delivering and explaining their Divine Master's teaching cannot be mistaken. Now of course St. Paul, professing to preach Christ's Gospel, could not but avow such an intention also; but it should be noticed, considering that he was not with our Lord on earth, how he devotes himself to the sole thought of Him; that is, it would be remarkable were not St. Paul Divinely chosen and called, as we believe him to have been. The thought of Christ is the one thought in which he lives; it is the fervent love, the devoted attachment, the zeal and reverence, of one who had heard, and seen, and looked upon, and handled the word of life.

III. The doctrine of the Incarnation, or the Gospel economy, as embracing the two great truths of the Divinity of Christ and the Atonement, was not (as far as we know) clearly revealed during our Lord's ministry. Yet how close is St. Paul's agreement with St. John. I consider the exact accordance between these two men (to all appearance as unlike each other by nature as men could be) to be little short of a demonstration of the reality of the Divine doctrines to which they witness. "The testimony of two men is true," and still more clearly so in this case supposing (what unbelievers may maintain, but they alone) that any rivalry of schools existed between these holy Apostles.

IV. St. John and St. Paul both put forward—(1) the doctrine of regeneration; (2) the praise of charity as the fulfilling of the law and the characteristic precept of the Gospel; (3) the duty of almsgiving; (4) self-denial; (5) the Holy Eucharist. Beyond controversy the agreement is in essentials: the nature and office of the Mediator, the gifts which He vouchsafes to us, and the

temper of mind and the duties required of a Christian; whereas the difference of doctrine between them, even admitting there is a difference, relates only at the utmost to the Divine counsels, the sense in which the Jewish law is abolished, and the condition of justification, whether faith or good works. A difference of opinion as to the latter subjects cannot detract from that real and substantial agreement of system visible in the course of doctrine which the two witnesses respectively deliver.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 175.

REFERENCES: xiii. 1-10.—C. Short, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 235. xiii. 3-5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1788.

Chap. xiii., ver. 5.—"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves," etc.

I. ALL Jewish history, the Apostle had told the Corinthians, was an ensample to them, upon whom the ends of the world had come. They were as liable to forget the new and better covenant as their forefathers were to forget the inferior one. They were as likely to think that they were not the children of God as those who were under the Law that they were not His servants. The consequences would be the same in kind, worse in degree: heartlessness, idolatry, division, self-exaltation, alternating with despondency. It was most needful for them to examine themselves, whether they were getting into this state of indifference and forgetfulness, to see whether outward as well as inward tokens did not show that it was creeping upon them, whether they were not conscious of a continual and growing degeneracy, whether the loss of brotherly feelings towards men did not accompany the loss of filial feeling towards God.

II. St. Paul goes on, "Know ye not your own selves, that Christ is in you?" The Apostle has been speaking of self-examination; now he speaks of the self-knowledge which justifies that examination, which makes it a reasonable, a possible, exercise. He speaks out the name of the invisible Lord and Teacher of his own spirit; he says to each man, "He is the Lord and Teacher of my spirit." He says that He has come into the world, and taken the nature of men upon Him, and died the death of men, and risen from the dead as man, and ascended on high as man, and is ever living as man at the right hand of God.

III. Self-examination involves no wretched poring over our own motives. It leads us at once to turn from the accusing spirit, which tells us that we are yielding to some vile motive

that will lead to some vile act, and to ask for the inspiration of Him in whom are the springs of all right action. This examination involves no neglect of plain work for the sake of morbid contemplation. It is in work we learn what we are liable to become if we have no helper, if we are left to ourselves. The temptation to be fretful and cowardly, to utter keen and bitter words, to feed upon flattery, to feed upon thoughts of malice or lust, to palter with dishonesty in common acts, to lie for the sake of a worldly end or of a godly end, the temptations of each particular craft and calling, the temptations of domestic life, of national life, of ecclesiastical life—these are the schools in which men have learnt to examine themselves, in which they have learnt the feebleness of mere rule, the necessity of a present living Teacher, in which they have found what this old nature is, which has to be mortified and crucified, what that new and true man whom Christ would renew in us day by day.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 207.

THE Necessity and Right Method of Self-examination.

I. Consider the necessity of self-examination. Every one stands placed against a standard unseen, but real, that by which God judges and marks the spiritual state of every one, the eternal law, the rule of Christian character. Every one stands in some certain, precise, discriminated relation to this grand rule of judgment. That is his true and exact condition. There is a manifestation of the Divine rule, and there is himself to bring, with all his consciousness, into comparison with it. And the state he is in, by the decision of that rule, is the state of his relations with all that is the most solemn in heaven and earth, in time and eternity. Therefore "know your own selves."

II. Notice the objects of self-examination. The earnest force of this examination should fix on the points named by the Apostle: "whether ye be in the faith, whether Jesus Christ be in you." It should not expend itself on the mere external conduct, for if that alone, in its simple gross sense, were to be taken account of, a well-regulated formalist or Pharisee, nay, possibly a hypocrite, might go off to considerable self-complacency. And you can imagine how often man has been frightened out of his soul to take refuge in the apparently better quality of his conduct. Any impulse the examiner feels to do so should warn him to stay a while longer there, in the interior,

Doubt and uncertainty ought to be a powerful incentive to self-examination. For surely the chief questions in the concern cannot be decided too soon. Indeed, to be content to remain in doubt would itself be one of the most ominous signs. If the true state of the case be unhappy and unsafe, it should be distinctly seen, that the soul may be instantly in action. If the state be, on the whole, such as the supreme Judge approves, and safe for time and eternity, who would not in this evil world desire to possess the joy of knowing it to be so?

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, 1st series, p. 337.

REFERENCES: xiii. 5.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 409; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. viii., p. 253; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 218. xiii. 7.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 253.

Chap. xiii., ver. 8.—**"For we have no power against the truth, but for the truth."**

THE Sceptic's Unconscious Ministry to the Truth.

I. Two things are terribly fruitful of scepticism, nay, are its chief parents in all ages: (1) the folly, vice, and passion which are mixed up with the life of all the Churches; (2) the narrowness and selfishness of their dogmatic conceptions of Divine truth. Scepticism of a very bitter kind is always generated when the Churches are very worldly. Men take the truth and the error, the good and the evil, together; and if the error and the evil seem to predominate, they say, and set themselves to prove, that the root must be bad which bears such fruits. Christ bears in all ages, as of old, the shame of the sins of His servants, and the sceptics arm themselves with scourges to chastise the vices and follies of the Church. But the main point of importance is the other. Scepticism is generated when Churches grow arrogant and oppressive, and frown on all attempts otherwise than by preaching their dogmas to widen the realm of truth.

II. It seems as if just now a rebellion had risen in every direction against the authority of the Church, not against truth, but against truth on Church authority. The Christ of authority, as the Church believes in Him, men will not have. They say, No; we will build up a new, more natural, more human, image of Christ for ourselves and for the world. Let them build. It is with an honest heart in the main that they make the effort; they have only to search deeply enough and to see far enough to discover for themselves that the only

simple Christ, the only natural Christ, the only human Christ, the only Christ who can supply man's need and satisfy man's longings, and fill the throne which is waiting the advent of Emmanuel in every human breast, is the Christ whom prophets foretold, whom Evangelists portrayed, whom Apostles proclaimed, whom the Church of God in every age adores.

J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 145.

References: xiii. 8.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., pp. 121, 181; J. Baldwin Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 138.

Chap. xiii., ver. 10.—"Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction."

The Christian View of the Perfectibility of Man.

I. One of the general ideas naturally arising at the repetition of such words would be that in futurity is the greatness of man, and that hereafter is the grand scene for the attainment of the fulness of his existence.

II. Another thing we may observe upon the words is that it is most gratifying to see the Divine revelation concerning the attribute, the condition, of perfection on any terms, in any sense, at any future period, with human nature. It would be gratifying if this were but intimated as a mere possibility; it is most emphatically so to see it expressed as an assurance, a promise. Looking at man, we seem to see a vast collection of little beginnings, attempts, failures, like a plantation on a bleak and blasted heath; and the progress in whatever is valuable and noble, whether in individuals or communities, is so miserably difficult and slow. Then how delightful it is to see revelation itself pronouncing as possible and predicting as to come something perfect in the condition of man.

III. Next, observe that this prediction of something perfect to come relates to knowledge. This is somewhat surprising. It seems more easy to conceive of perfection in another state attained or conferred in any of what may be called the moral attributes than in knowledge, even in any moderate and comparative sense. Such knowledge would imply (1) the exclusion of error, or, in other words, that all opinion will be truth. (2) It will be perfectly adequate to the infallible direction of all the activities of the superior state. (3) Those who have it will possess as much as is indispensable to their happiness, and will be sensible that they do so.

IV. Lastly, if there will be, as none can doubt, in the heavenly

state, different degrees in the felicity of the redeemed spirits, and if knowledge will be one great means of felicity there, who may be expected to possess the highest attainments of it? Not necessarily those, even good men, who possessed the most of it here, but rather those who have excelled the most in piety, in devotion to God and Christ and the cause of Heaven in this world. God can, by one great act of His rewarding power, make them the highest in intelligence, and it is reasonable to believe He will.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, 1st series, p. 402.

REFERENCES: xiii. 11.—J. Morgan, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 353; M. G. Pearse, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 401; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 206; F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 389; J. Leckie, *Sermons Preached at Ibrox*, p. 338.

Chap. xiii., ver. 14.—"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

THE Covenant of Redemption.

I. Consider the character of this covenant, for this is a point of the highest importance as regards our thoughts, and our hopes, and our actions. The character of God's covenant of redemption is love. The will of the Father is to gather the Christian into Christ with an everlasting salvation. All adverse appearances, all interruptions to the consciousness of this, arising from himself or from the world, must not for a moment outweigh the great central truth that God loveth him. In holding this fact in full acknowledgment of his position in Christ, consist his safety and his life. "Thy will be done" is the expression of a soul which knows and feels this. We must be tried: we must be purified; the dethronement of self and the setting up of God in our hearts cannot take place without a struggle, a war, within. This conflict may be fierce and long-continued; it may seem like the rending asunder of soul and spirit; it may bring us down into the depths of dispiritedness, and almost extinguish our hope; but let not any intensity of conflict, or any self-loathing, or any forebodings for the future ever cause us to forget that the mind of God to us is love.

II. Other points to be considered regard the covenant itself. And one is that Holy Scripture uniformly sets it forth to us as a covenant made and ratified before the foundation of the world. Another important thing for us to regard who receive and acknowledge the glory of the Eternal Trinity is the intelligent and clear appreciation in our spiritual life of the parts and offices of the Divine Persons in our redemption. In the purpose

of the Father, it had its ground, and has its continuance. It is His will that we should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. In the finished work of the Son on earth and His high-priesthood in heaven, it had, and has, its actuality as it now exists. And God the Holy Spirit begets and carries on in our souls this spiritual life, dwelling in us, purifying our hearts and motives, making us holy and gradually more and more like God. Let this important fact be ever borne in mind: that our recognition of the wonderful love of God in redemption may be no barren acquiescence in an orthodox doctrine, but a quickening reality in our own hearts and lives, full of seeds of love, and peace, and joy, and increase in holiness.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 290.

REFERENCES: xiii. 14.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 285; R. Maguire, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 465; J. T. Stannard, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 260; E. Hatch, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 353; J. Hall, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 56; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 294; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, p. 243; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 318; T. T. Lynch, *Three Months' Ministry*, p. 313.

GALATIANS.

REFERENCES: i. 1.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 116; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 187; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 279. i. 4.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 213. i. 4, 5.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 43; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 222. i. 6-8.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., pp. 30, 31. i. 7.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 98. i. 8.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 1. i. 8-12.—E. White, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 328. i. 10.—R. Smith, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 241; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 37. i. 10-14.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 107. i. 11, 12.—J. Baines, *Sermons*, p. 44. i. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 656; E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 234.

Chap. i., vers. 15, 16.

DELAY the Silence of Conscience.

I. There are grounds, in the very nature of the case, for questioning whether in religion second thoughts are best. It shall hardly ever happen that the man who does not at once act on the impulse to prayer, but takes time for deliberation, will set himself solemnly to the duty of prayer. It is not that the duty will not bear being deliberated; it is only that second thoughts are worse than the first, as being thoughts that have been tampered with and alloyed by human pride and corruption. The best rule is the rule on which St. Paul acted, the rule of allowing no pause, no time for a second thought, between conviction as to a thing being right and adopting it, conviction as to a thing being wrong and avoiding it. "Immediately" and "I conferred not with flesh and blood."

II. It is painful to observe how Christians often halt between two opinions; how perplexed they are as to the right or the wrong of certain courses of action; how they run hither and thither for advice and for counsel, asking the sentiments of all their acquaintances and changing their own as they receive different answers. The first touches of God's Spirit are meant to be transient, unless they are attended to. If you would keep the dew on the grass, you must keep the sun from the plant.

If you would keep the impression on the heart, you must keep the world from the heart. Second thoughts make infidels, when first would have made believers. Second thoughts crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, when first would have crucified the flesh.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1585.

REFERENCES: i. 15-17.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 50; *Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 33. i. 16.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 125; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250. i. 16, 17.—Ince, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 137.

Chap. i., ver. 20.—**"For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."**

MEN-PLEASING.

I. Deliverance from the fear of men and from the necessity of always seeking to please men may be taken as a general description of the liberty of Christians; while, on the other hand, the necessity to please men represents, as it were, in a very typical manner, the non-freedom of a natural unredeemed man. All social relations involve a desire and an endeavour to please, to be accounted by other people as reposing a certain worth in them and as having a corresponding worth for them. That is a necessary thing, and therefore, of course, it is not in itself a wrong thing. Respect for others and due regard for the respect which others may pay to us is a necessary foundation of social life. If there is any man on earth for whom you have lost all respect, you may be sure that the fault is yours not less than his. It is plain, then, that slavery of the fear of man and bondage, the desire of pleasing men, is not the same thing as regard for the esteem of our fellow-men, with true respect for them. The real tyranny of men-pleasing which runs through natural society is this: that we are constantly constrained to do something, not because the action has any value towards God or man, but simply because usage and custom demand it of us, and if we did otherwise, we should give offence, be misunderstood, and so forth. The regard for what our neighbours will say or think constrains us to do things which we know are not our right work, things that are really a waste of the strength that God has given us. But what we have here to observe is, that this bondage is part of the bondage of sin.

II. How are we to be freed from this yoke of men-serving? Observe that even in a state of nature the slavery of men-pleasing

does not press equally on all. Most persons have definite hard work to do, and they have to do it without looking either to the right or to the left; but that is not a true deliverance, because the work takes up every energy of life, cuts the worker off from all human fellowship, and so lays him under a more galling bondage. So, on the other hand, when I have done my day's work, part of life remains, and this part is sure to become more or less subject to men-pleasing. The only true deliverance is the plan of life large enough to take in both the hours of work and play, a scheme in which a man can find his own day's work laid out and plainly set before him, so that he may set himself to do it unswayed by what men may say or think, and yet with an assurance that just in doing this work, and doing it without any men-pleasing, he shall realise a true and full fellowship of life with his fellow-men; and this, I say, no man can realise till he becomes a servant of Christ. The true life can only be a life for God and in God; but then a life to and in God is only possible in Christ, for however noble and clear a plan God in law and providence may set before us, still sin can prevent us following the plan. We must have the forgiveness of sin, the promise of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of a Divine grace strong enough to conquer sin, of a power surrounding our life and keeping us close to God, in spite of all our weakness and all our sin; and this we can only have in a personal relation of faith to Christ our Saviour.

W. Robertson Smith, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 241.

Reference: i. 20.—T. T. Carter, *Sermons*, p. 386.

Chap. i., ver. 23.—"But they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

The Conversion of St. Paul.

I. The change that was made in Saul was of the most extraordinary kind, and not to be accounted for by any of those sudden transitions which one sometimes sees in unstable and vacillating characters. He was a man whose whole feelings, prejudices, and interests were enlisted against Christianity. He could become a Christian only by the sacrifice of position, property, and perhaps even of life. And if you consider the history of Saul, his hatred of Christianity, the ties which bound him to great men amongst the Jews, and the advantages which depended on adherence to his party, you must allow that he would not have been brought to preach the faith which once he destroyed unless by such a demonstration that Jesus was God's

Son, as to his own mind at least was quite irresistible. The brightness which struck down Saul of Tarsus lights up the moral firmament of every other generation. The voice by which he was arrested sends its echoes to the remotest lands and the remotest times.

II. The operations of God's Spirit are various, and the only proof of being in Christ is to be a new creature; but being a new creature does not in any degree depend on being able to tell how and when you were renewed. Make it your business to ascertain the change, and not to explain it.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2022.

REFERENCES: i. 23.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 246. i. 23, 24.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 24. i. 24.—F. Aveling, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 4; J. Stoughton, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 145; H. Simon, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 53.

Chap. ii., vers. 6-10.

MANY, but One.

It would seem as if in the slow progress of some men's minds the last discovery that they make is that truth is many-sided; they have gone on year after year mistaking a statement of truth for the entire truth itself, until at last, perhaps in communion with some larger-hearted disciple of another faith, they have found the statement far too narrow for the larger conceptions which have happily dawned upon them. In the text we have—

I. The very first principle of Christian charity. The Gospel is the expression of God's endeavour to bring man to His own standpoint; and what is true of character must also be true of thought: the liberal-mindedness of a truly Christian man is not the indifference of one whose hold upon his own principles is so slight that it does not seem to him to matter what a man believes, but is rather the recognition of a great circle of truth in God's purpose, of which many differing statements may be simply segments, imperfectly seen. We constantly admit this principle even in the degrees of human knowledge. Truth has its dim and limited visions in dark places and the full blaze of its day and brightness, and the whole spirit of Christ's demand upon us is that not only shall we seek always to dwell in the fullest possible light which we can see, but, much more than that, we are to bear ourselves also with the reverence and the charity of men who believe that truth is greater and broader

than any vision of ours can realise, and that the statement which to us appears a full light may to another, nearer to God, be miserably imperfect and insufficient.

II. With all the variety of service in the early Church, there was one thing in which the differing parties were absolutely at one: "They would that we should remember the poor, which very thing I also was zealous to do." The ministry to the needy was something concerning which there was no cause to dispute. The Apostles, on one side, are eager to make it a condition of service; the great Apostle, upon the other side, is even more eager to fulfil that condition. It is, I think, perfectly clear that the self-same spirit which enabled them to take the broad catholic view of the Gospel which they preached would necessarily involve this desire to minister to the poor. In the history of men's thoughts of God we may almost compare the approach to Him to the approach to a fortified city. At the outer circle are the fortresses and defences: there are the polemics, the mere theologians, those whose chief activity is about the letter and theory of their religious faith. The next circle is the city itself: those who are chiefly concerned about God's government, whose chief speech is of law and order and justice. The next circle is the temple, the religious part of the city life: these are the devout, religious souls whose religion is yet something of a restraint. But beyond the temple is the home of the city's King, and there are the beginnings and the causes of all; whatever is there must determine all the rest. Christ's great Gospel is that there is love, and that for this love He came to fulfil God's great redeeming purpose, and it is essential that all who seek in any fashion to forward that purpose should date their inspiration from there.

W. H. HARWOOD, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. l., p. 379.

REFERENCES: ii. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248. ii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 99; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 77. ii. 11.—Archbishop Thomson, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 1; S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 42. ii. 11-21.—W. M. Taylor, *Paul the Missionary*, p. 186. ii. 16.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 214.

Chap. ii., ver. 19.—**"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God."**

I. ST. PAUL was dead to the law in two ways. First, he no longer sought in it the motive power which should enable him to bring forth fruit to God. It had itself cured him of this delusion. Henceforth he knew a more effectual motive, the love

of Christ, that should constrain him to obedience, being in itself precept and power in one. And, secondly, he was loosed from the law, dead to it, in that he no longer sought to be accepted with God through, and on the ground of, his observance of it. For he had found, by a mournful experience, that it wrought not acceptance, but rejection, a terror of God, and not a confidence toward God; that by works of the law could no flesh be justified. While yet this dying to the law, as he goes on to say, was not a dying to all law. The law of the Spirit of life took the place of a dead, yet threatening, letter. He put one yoke off him, but in the act of this he put another on him. In fact, he only could get rid of one by assuming the other, even the yoke of Him whose yoke is easy, and whose burden is light. He died to the law; but he died to it that he might live unto God.

II. For us also it stands true that we are not under the law, but under grace; and we also should be able to say with Paul, "I through the law am dead to the law." Christ's Gospel is not a law at all, but rather a new power communicated to humanity; a new hiding of the heavenly leaven in the lump of our nature; the casting of fire upon earth, the new fire of a heavenly love and of the Holy Ghost, who is love, which should enkindle the cold hearts of men and burn up in them the dross which the law indeed could make them aware of, but which it could never burn out from them. It was the coming in of new spiritual forces into the world. It demanded more from man, but it also gave more; in fact, it demanded nothing which it had not first given. The law, when regarded apart from Christ, is like that fabled Medusa's head which froze those that looked at it into stone. But Christ thaws those frozen hearts again, causes the pulses to play and the genial life-blood to flow in them once more.

R. C. Trench, *Westminster and Other Sermons*, p. 177.

References: ii. 19.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 145. ii. 19, 20.—W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 292; S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 56.

Chap. ii., ver. 20.—"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

From Centre to Circumference.

I. We have, first, the great central fact named last, but round which all the Christian life is gathered; "The Son of God,

who loved me and gave Himself for me." (1) Christ's death is a great act of self-surrender, of which the one motive is His own pure and perfect love. (2) That great act of self-surrendering love which culminates on the Cross is regarded as being for man in a special and peculiar sense. (3) We have here brought into vivid prominence the great thought that Jesus in His death has regard to single souls.

II. Note the faith which makes that fact the foundation of our own personal life. True faith is personal faith, which appropriates and, as it were, fences in as my very own the purpose and benefit of Christ's giving of Himself.

III. Note the life which is built upon this faith. The true Christian life is dual. It is a life in the flesh, and it is also a life in faith. It has its surface amidst the shifting mutabilities of earth, but its root in the silent eternities and the centre of all things, which is Christ in God.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 192.

I. ST. PAUL'S words imply two chief elements in this new life, which thus by faith he lived in the Son of God. (1) One of these two points is love, for it was our Lord's love towards him that he here dwells upon. He had embraced the love of Christ towards himself, and love in his own soul towards his Lord was the result. It is to be observed that our Lord's individualising love is what he speaks of: "The Son of God, who loved *me*." This individuality gives intensity to love, causing it to be a personal, as distinguished from a mere general, love. (2) The second element of life on which St. Paul dwells in the text is the consciousness of mercy in being redeemed. This consciousness is intimately connected with love; but yet they are to be distinguished: "The Son of God, *who gave Himself for me*." This conviction embraced in his soul was the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins. St. Paul's words assume the fact of the Atonement in the sense of a substitution of Another sacrificed and accepted for himself.

II. The text, moreover, touches on one of the deep, practical questions of Christianity, namely, whether its aim be to make Christ and His example the standard and guide of our life or to establish us in the freedom and power of an illuminated reason, which supersedes the necessity of an appeal to our Lord's life as a standard. St. Paul's words prove that Christ was to him the living mould and pattern of his life in its most advanced stage.

III. We here see one reason of the difference between the righteous men of the old and those of the new covenant, a difference manifest to every one who reads even cursorily the book of God. There is in the great men of the New Testament a completeness, a consistency, a steadfastness, a maturity of formed character, which marks a different era.

IV. There are conditions of mind which must co-operate with the grace of God in order to attain any measure of such likeness to our Lord. There must be (1) a yielded will, (2) a contrite sense of the sinfulness which is past, with (3) a rejoicing thankfulness that the precious blood has touched it and cleansed it away.

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 386.

Chap. ii., ver. 20.—"I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

I. WE may see in the principles involved in the text the chief characteristic note of sanctity. What forms the spirit is the ready compliance of the soul with the influences of the indwelling presence of God. He moves the springs of life, gives them their bent, endues them with power, and directs them to their appointed end. Saintliness always exhibits a likeness to Christ. As the streams of water that gush upward are identified with the spring from which they issue, even so there is a likeness in the saint to Christ, because it is Himself reproducing Himself in the individual forms of character of the separate persons in whom He dwells.

II. We may also here learn how there exists a perpetual power of revival in the Church's life, and by what means it may be quickened. The indwelling of Christ is the source of faith. Now there is a twofold presence on which the Church's life hangs. There is a presence common to the whole body, external to every individual member, which centres in the blessed Eucharist; and there is a presence which is personal, confined to each individual soul, and centred in its own hidden life, for it is not the presence of God simply as God which constitutes the life of the Church—this is the creed of nature—but the presence of God incarnate, of God in Christ, revealing Himself according to express covenant. As faith in this twofold presence rises or falls, so may we expect that the life of the Church and its members will rise or fall also. (1) It is manifestly so with regard to the Church. Is not each revival in the Church the very awakening of the Lord in the ship on the sea of Galilee, where He had slept for awhile, but where He had never ceased

to be? And is it not reasonable to believe that as faith in that presence revives, and we cry unto Him in the prayer of such a faith, we have the surest hope of the revival of the Church's life? (2) Is it not the same in each individual's life? Must it not be the looking off from all secondary motives, all intervening objects, and looking direct on the Divine will that impels us forward, and by faith in Him who commands it going forth to fulfil it?

T. T. CARTER, *Sermons*, p. 222.

REFERENCES: ii. 20.—C. Vince, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 56; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 44; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 306; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 380; R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 261; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 276; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 247; vol. ii., p. 249; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 781; vol. xxvii., No. 1599; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 351; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 28; vol. iii., p. 113; vol. iv, p. 87. ii. 21—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1534; Tyng, *American Pulpit of the Day*, p. 364; H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, 4th series, p. 526; *Ibid.*, 5th series, p. 57; Parker, *City Temple*, vol. iii., p. 373; A. Jessopp, *Norwich School Sermons*, p. 183; S. Macnaughton, *Real Religion and Real Life*, p. 50; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 13th series, p. 13. iii. 1.—A. Barry, *Sermons for Passiontide and Easter*, p. 21; J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 177; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 254; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 182; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1546; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 287; *Ibid.*, vol. ix., p. 61. iii. 2.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1705. iii. 2-24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 87. iii. 3.—*Ibid.*, vol. iv., No. 178.

Chap. iii., vers. 7-9

ABRAHAM.

"God," says the text, "preached the Gospel to Abraham." The very oath sworn to him by his Maker was, according to the Epistle to the Hebrews, designed to show to the heirs of promise, down the whole stream of time, the immutability of God's counsels. God forbid, cries St. Paul, that any one should think that the law—the schoolmaster who was to bring us to Christ—was against the promises of God! Though the sanctions of the two covenants might be different—a circumstance which does not in the least affect the moral obligation—the terms on which they dealt with man were the same. This development may be more complete, more uniform, more equable, more progressive, under the Gospel than under the law; but the direction of that development was ever, if not consciously towards Christ,

least towards Christianity. The life story of Abraham must have something in it that it concerns Christians of every age to know. It illustrates—

I. What faith is. Abraham to the age of St. Paul, before and above any saint in the annals of his race, was the representative of the nature of faith and its power; faith, not as opposed to reason, but as opposed to sight. It was not perfect, but it was real; it rested on the simplest virtues.

II. What it is to walk by faith. A consistent endeavour to frame the life so as to be in accordance with our convictions, so that what we are should be an expression to others of what we believe—this is what the Apostle means by walking by faith, and not by sight.

III. What it is, to the eye of such faith, to see Christ's day. What is Christ's day but the measure of knowledge of the will of God which it is our privilege to enjoy, and those opportunities of access to Him which all have, though all may not use? Even to us who live in the middle of that day, the light can be called neither clear nor dark. The knowledge is partial and fragmentary; the hopes, but not the eye, enter into that which is within the veil. What does Christ do for those who consciously live in the light of this day? He lifts them up from earth to heaven; sets their affections on things above; helps them to understand what that means, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

BISHOP FRASER, *University Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: iii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 174. iii. 10-13.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 72. iii. 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 814; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 567. iii. 11, 12.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 237.

Chap. iii., ver. 13 (with Rom. v. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 56; Gal. iv. 4, 5; Rom. vii. 4).—"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

THE Saviour of Men.

Take the illustration of a drowning man, and compare it with the hapless condition of sinful men. In order to save the man there must be six conditions of success.

I. Some one from the shore must undertake to save him.

II. The helper must leave the shore and come to him, so that he can grasp him.

III. In order to come to him his deliverer must come within the sweep of the law. There is no other way of reaching him

than through the current. Christ comes down close to where we are, so that men can not only see Him, but touch Him, grasp Him, take Him by the hand.

IV. The rescuer must bear the drowning man's share of the curse of the law if he would save him. The same strain comes as before, but the man's friend bears the strain for him. It is only on this condition that he can possibly be saved. The strength of the law which was against us had to exert its force on Christ.

V. Not only must the deliverer bear the sufferer's share of the force of the law which sweeps him down, but he must have strength enough to stand it all and get safe back again. Christ was not submerged under the waves for long. He regains the shore. He has come through it all. He has borne the whole curse. It is all finished. And yet He lives, omnipotent to save.

VI. The saviour and the saved must be firmly bound together. The drowning man cannot be saved unless he be attached to his deliverer, and in the same way the sinner cannot be saved unless he be attached to Jesus Christ.

J. Monro Gibson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 56.

References: iii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 873. iii. 16-18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 89. iii. 19—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 123. iii. 19, 20.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol ii., p. 409. iii. 21.—E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 312. iii. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1145; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 351.

Chap. iii., ver. 23.—"But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed."

The Reasonableness of the Gospel.

I. There is something of a military allusion in this passage which it may be well to point out. The expression "kept under the law" denotes in the original being kept as in a citadel or garrison. It is this expression, "shut up unto the faith," which gives our text much of its power and singularity. The Law surrounded the Jews, as it were, with a rampart, effectually preventing their uniting with the rest of mankind, until their object of faith, which is Christ, or the dispensation of faith, which is the Gospel, should come in the fulness of time. But while we admit that the passage before us has a reference to the Jew, derived altogether from local and temporary circumstances, we cannot doubt that the expression "shut up unto the faith" applies to men of other lands and other

generations. We regard this expression as making out to us what may be called the reasonableness of the Gospel.

II. The Gospel is a reasonable scheme—reasonable on the principle that, whatever other way is devised and tried, it is invariably found deficient, so that man remains shut up to the Gospel as his only resource. (1) The law leaves no place for repentance. (2) The law emphatically exhibits the necessity for a mediator. It will meet man like an ever-watchful adversary in his successive endeavours to appease conscience and propitiate God, driving him back and producing at least the confession that there is no alternative but eternal death or the suretyship of a mediator. It shuts us up to the faith and Christ crucified; it keeps us in a garrison, that we may be willing to receive and accept of salvation. We make a wrong use of the law, if it does not lead us to Christ.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1834.

Chap. iii., ver. 24.—"The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

LOVE in the Schooling of the Law.

Over all righteousness before men the will has power, because it is a righteousness of outward acts; but the will has not power over the desires and affections, in other words over the superior faculties of which it is a servant. It can produce good deeds to a certain extent, but it cannot produce good tendencies. Our actions are in our own hand, but our hearts are not. And God's law, which is summed up in one command, "Thou shalt love," regards not outward actions, but the direction of the heart. Therefore the will, which is powerful over so many things that lie in its department and beneath it, is utterly powerless in this, which lies out of its department and above it. It cannot fulfil the law of God. Consider how the law prepared men for the redemption of Christ.

I. Take, first, the case of the heathen, who live without a written law. In them the Fall reached its utmost depth. Conscience, bewildered and degraded, almost ceased to testify to the law of love. These were alive without the law; they knew no spiritual want, sighed for no deliverance; their being had sunk so low that the higher place from which they had fallen was hidden from them. But now comes in the written law, with its requirements, which the will of man cannot fulfil, its revelations of the higher place of love and freedom, its burdens of guilt on the awakened conscience. The sinner is by the

law of God awakened and enlightened. He sees God as his object. But out of all the workings of the law in the sinner springs up not one plant of righteousness, nothing but a widening and deepening conviction of guilt, and incapacity, and danger, and death.

II. But now let us mark the effect on this man as a being of the future. To sit down in despair and die is a rare exception to his general constitution; place him in misery, and he sighs for deliverance. And the sinner, convicted under God's law, proved incapable of fulfilling it, is thereby made to cry out for deliverance. The awakening of the desire for good proves that sin was not his natural state, but a corruption of his nature. This sorrow points to joy, this hunger to satisfaction, this thirst to refreshment. For we cannot for a moment suppose that the good and loving God should awaken by His law this sense of misery and this desire for deliverance in His creatures merely to torment them and to drive them to despair. Therefore the law of God, by its very office of convicting of sin and bringing about a longing for deliverance, does, in fact, contain, wrapped in its depths, a promise of pardon and a prospect of deliverance.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 100.

REFERENCES: iii. 24.—H. P. Liddon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 70; *Ibid.*, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 385; *Ibid.*, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1130; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 78. iii. 24, 25.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1196. iii. 25, 26.—*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 26. iii. 25-29.—W. Spensley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii, p 61. iii. 26.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 78. iii. 26, 27.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 357. iii. 26-28.—Bishop Westcott, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 113; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 273. iii. 26-29.—Bishop Westcott, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 222.

Chap. iii., ver. 28.—"**There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**"

UNITY in Diversity.

St. Paul makes a threefold separation of the human race into two dissimilar classes. This classification is governed by (1) the great intellectual differences and antagonisms among men, (2) the chief emotional and constitutional differences of character, and (3) the prodigious distinctions effected by external circumstances.

I. The first of these divisions was based on the great antagonism which was so admirably expressed in the Apostle's

day by the intellectual differences obtaining between the Jew and the Greek. The Jew was the type of all who in every age of the Church are by their education, mental habits, or dispositions, disposed to lay violent stress on the external sign, on the tangible symbol, on the sacramental test, on the old tradition. The Greek was the type of the class of Christian men at the present time whose mental constitution, habits, and education almost lead them, in their hatred of superstition, to discourage faith and to denounce the letter and the body and the form of truth so harshly as to shatter the costly vase which contains its fragrant essence. If these two tendencies are left to themselves unchecked and unchastised, very distant will be the day when Jew and Greek shall be one.

II. The second of the classifications is the great constitutional and emotional difference of character expressed by the antitheses of male and female.

III. The third is that great division due to differences arising out of external circumstances: the bond and the free. These three great divisions find in Christ their true counteraction. (1) There is now neither Jew nor Greek; they are both one in Christ Jesus. In like manner, if the Jew and Greek of these days will look on and up to the great uniting principle of holy life and truth in the person and sacrifice of Christ, they will clasp inseparable hands and antedate the harmonies of heaven. (2) Christ is the mediating power between the masculine and feminine mind. Christ is the wellspring of the strong motives to right action and of the deepest passions of holy love. (3) The bond and free are one in Christ. The slave lifts up his fetters, and feels that he is the Lord's free man; the free man is bold to acknowledge himself the Lord's slave.

H. R. Reynolds, *Notes on the Christian Life*, p. 44.

Chap. iii., ver. 28.—"Ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

I. When we look at the history of the world, we learn something, even from ordinary history, of the oneness of the human race. We are one with those who are very distant from us in time. When we read the history of the men of old, we see how like they were to ourselves in their passions, in their sufferings, in their desires, and in their rejoicing. The old fathers looked not for transitory promises. If their family life was blessed, it was from looking forward in the same spirit of faith which unites us with our Saviour to the fulfilment of promises given from the

very first and to the blessedness of union as children of one Father.

II. There are those who are separated from us in time and in place, and there are other separations more unchristian far and much more difficult to overcome than are even these physical separations. Old distinctions may have gone down amongst us which separated bond and free, but the gulf between the rich and poor remains. How important that we should all impress upon our minds that we are one in Christ Jesus, and that this oneness can only be practically maintained by some vigorous efforts on our part to overcome the physical difficulties which are separating us from one another. We are one in our sinfulness, one in our need of a Saviour to rescue us from our sin, one in the hopes which that Saviour gives, and, as one event is waiting for all, there is one hope in one Lord, for whom we are looking forward in the steadfastness of our one faith as redeemed by our one Lord.

A. C. TAIT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 65.

I. WE are all one in Christ Jesus. In Him the dispensation is regathered. All things, St. Paul says, in heaven and in earth, are gathered together in Him. It seems as though angels who never fell are in some manner interested and concerned in that regathering. Certainly the dead, equally with the living, are so. Each separately must put on, must invest himself with, Jesus Christ. Cast your burden, and sin, and sorrow, and conscious weakness upon Christ as your Friend. Then are you inside Him. He includes, He contains, you, and in the dread day of days, when the avenger of blood looks for you, he shall find only Christ—only Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, Him risen.

II. In the exercise of that incorporation, or that union, and that oneness, will our true fellowship henceforth be found. All minor differences of place and intercourse sink at once into nothing. Place and sight may make the difference of pleasure, of comfort, of expressed communion, of conscious unity; but they make no difference whatever as to the reality, as to the essence, of union. We are all one person in Christ.

III. In the face of such union, let us learn—it is a hard lesson—let us learn to despise and trample under foot all other. What is neighbourhood? What is co-existence? Men live next door to each other, and never meet; meet, and never commune; commune, and are never one. At last a call comes.

One goes forth at the summons of business, of necessity, of the Gospel, to a distant shore: seas roll between, they never see, they never hear of each other more; yet for the first time they may be one—one person—in Christ. The communion of saints is between them, and therefore the life of life, the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Last Words at Doncaster*, p. 311.

REFERENCES: iii. 28.—Bishop Westcott, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 185; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 128; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 271; A. B. Evans, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 253; A. C. Tait, *Ibid.*, vol. viii., p. 65; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 405. iv. 1-7.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 289.

Chap. iv., ver. 3.—"We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world."

I. MANKIND has been in the position of a child, and successive generations have been slowly trained by God's fatherly care, as a preparation for that liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, that life and immortality brought to light by the Gospel, the all-pervading glory of the Sun of righteousness.

II. Consider the lessons to be learned from the fact that the preparatory discipline of a partial revelation and imperfect religious system in the law has been followed by a complete manifestation of God to man in the Gospel. Throughout the Epistle to the Galatians St. Paul protests against the fatal error of confounding the two dispensations and of viewing the law, not as ordained to make ready the way of the Lord, but as intended to be a permanent rule, entangling us for ever in the yoke of bondage. *After that faith is come*, faith in Christ as a living Friend and Saviour, whose great love for us constrains us to love Him in return, *we are no longer under a schoolmaster*, we have no more need of such a tutor, nor would it be natural to submit to such discipline.

III. In reckoning the law among the elements of the unspiritual outer world, St. Paul is only speaking of its transient institutions, its principle of mere obedience to the letter, its temporary permission of imperfect morality, its sacrifices, ceremonies, and types, which were to train mankind for Christianity, and not of its eternal testimony to truth and holiness. (1) We shall fall back under the bondage of the law if we go about to establish our own righteousness, instead

of submitting ourselves to the righteousness of God. (2) We return to the law if we content ourselves with a conventional Christianity, a mere conformity to the standard of religion sanctioned by the world. (3) We may also become entangled again in the yoke of bondage by lowering the standard of Christian holiness and adopting some of those inferior principles of morality which, in the times of ignorance, God winked at. (4) Once more, we are falling back, like the Galatians, to the elements of the world if we are led astray, by a formal and ceremonial system of religion, from the simplicity that is in Christ. We Christians are called to the duties and privileges of spiritual manhood, to obedience resulting from principle, from conviction, from gratitude for God's forgiving mercy, and a desire for true holiness. This desire can only be gratified, these feelings can only be realised, through fellowship with the Lord Jesus by faith. Therefore whatsoever keeps us from Him is a return from the brightness of the New Testament to the twilight of the Old.

G. E. L. COTTON, *Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. i., p. 64.

REFERENCE: iv. 3-6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxx., No. 1815.

Chap. iv., ver. 4.—"God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

CHRIST Obedient to the Law.

I. Christ's obedience to the law was not a matter of course, following upon His incarnation. Scripture everywhere separates the two, making His obedience an additional thing, undertaken by Him over and above His becoming man. It was a positive thing, not to be for a moment in our thoughts merged in the mere negative fact of His being pure and free from sin.

II. Secondly, it was not only an integral, but also a necessary, part of His work of redemption. The Jew was lifted above all the other nations, and stood nearer to God. His privilege was greater, and his guilt was different. The guilt of all mankind before God was indeed that of original disobedience, but might now be said to consist in blindly following sinful courses, while Israel's guilt was that of constant and deliberate disregard of a written and ever-present law. And that righteousness which put man into the position of God's approval being to come in by one Man, Jesus Christ, all cases of guilt must be covered, all situations of disobedience taken up and borne and carried triumphantly out into perfection and accordance with the Father's

will by the Son of God in our flesh; and this could only be done by His taking upon Himself the situation of the higher responsibility and the deeper guilt. And there was another reason why our Lord should have been made under the law: His fulfilling of the will of God for man was to be, not only complete, but was to be our pattern, that as He was holy, so we might be holy also; and this it could not have been had it not been of the highest kind. He not only fulfilled all righteousness in His own person, but He showed to us, His disciples, a new and better way: He led us up through the law, and out of and above the law, into our obedience and spiritual freedom, so that He has satisfied and abolished the handwriting of ordinances that was against us and has taken it out of the way, nailing it to His cross.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 88.

THE Fulness of Time.

I. God sent forth His Son, and sent Him in the fulness of time. In four ways God had prepared the civilised world for the reception of Christianity. (1) By means of the Roman empire He had reduced all the world under one government, so that there was free intercourse between all parts of the known world, and there was no political obstacle to the spread of the faith from one nation to another. (2) By means of the Greek language, the most perfect instrument of thought ever known, He had made the earth to be of one tongue, and thus He had prepared the way for the advent of Christ. (3) By means of the chosen people of the Jews, having still their religious centre at Jerusalem, yet scattered throughout the world, He had provided a nursery for the tender plant of the Gospel. (4) By reason of the general confluence and mutual competition of all kinds of heathen idolatries, He had caused heathenism to lose its old repute and power over souls.

II. Why did God not send His Son sooner into the world to comfort and to save? Is it not hard to think of the Son of God looking calmly down through all the ages on His miserable creatures, tormenting and slaying one another, crying with piteous, unavailing cries to that heaven which, in its unmoved majesty, only seemed to mock their agony? We may ask these questions, but we cannot answer them. Revelation is as dumb as Nature herself to these inquiries. We only know that to God the moment of our Saviour's advent was the fulness of the time, was the earliest moment in which He could come to

our help. But He that stooped from His Divine estate to die upon the cross has surely earned our confidence. We do not know how the history of the world is to be reconciled with the goodness of God, but we can believe. Jesus Christ has surely a right to demand that we should trust Him, not only with the present, but with the past, too.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 323.

THE Fulness of Time.

I. There was a threefold work of preparation for the Son of God, carried forward in what was then called the civilised world, and each portion of this preparation demanded the lapse of a certain period. (1) The world had to be prepared in a certain sense politically for His work. In order to spread an idea or a creed, two instruments are very desirable. The first is a common language, and the second is a common social system, common laws, a common government. The first of these conditions was partly provided by the conquests of Alexander. He spread the Greek language through Western Asia, throughout Egypt; and when Greece itself was conquered, the educated Romans learned the language of the vanquished provincials. And during the half-century which preceded the birth of Christ the Roman empire was finally consolidated into a great political whole, so that Palestine and Spain, so that North Africa and Southern Germany, were administered by a single government. Christianity, indeed, did not need this. It passed beyond the frontiers of the empire in the lifetime of the Apostles. But this preparation was an important element in the process by which preceding ages led up to the fulness of time. (2) There was a preparation in the convictions of mankind. The most gifted of races had done its best with heathenism, and the result was that all the highest and purest minds loathed the present and looked forward to the future. It was the fulness of the time. (3) There was also a preparation in the moral experience of mankind. The widespread corruption of the age, the longing for better things, marked the close of the epoch of moral experiments; it announced that the fulness of the time had come.

II. The fulness of the time came, and God sent forth His Son. If we had seen Jesus Christ in His earthly life and had freely opened our souls without prejudice to the impression He could have produced upon them, what would that impression have been? (1) First of all, we should have observed that He stands in a totally different relation towards moral truth from

that of every other man whom we have ever met. His life breathes sinlessness, freedom, peace. To Him the law can bring no curse. The law does but express His character in human words; He is strictly in harmony with it. (2) And not merely is His life thus sinless: it is also at harmony with itself. Precisely because He is not like any individual man, with some great special endowment, with some striking idiosyncrasy, but, on the contrary, of a humanity so universal, so comprehensive, that all feel that they have their share in Him, and even Pilate, unconscious of the mighty truth he was uttering, could cry, "Behold the man," therefore He draws all men to Himself; therefore He can sanctify all human capacities; therefore He can subdue all human wills; therefore the century in which, and the people among which, He appears cannot monopolise Him. He and His revelation have on them the clear mark of eternity. He can bring all whose hearts are not closed against His advances by wilful sin into their right relation towards God and towards each other.

H. P. LIDDON, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 703.

REFERENCES: iv. 4.—H. Batchelor, *The Incarnation of God*, p. 1; H. P. Liddon, *Christmastide Sermons*, p. 74; *Ibid.*, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 157; G. Bainton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 150. iv. 4, 5.—W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 393; J. Monro Gibson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 56; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 331; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 321.

Chap. iv., vers. 4, 6.—**"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."**

LET us consider wherein consisted the preparation of the fulness of the time preceding the birth of Christ for a new turn in the history of the world and wherein consisted the special peculiarity of the coming of Christ which made it the germ of what there was to be in the ages following, and further see how this is really true of ourselves and of our own age.

I. There was a general sickness, so to speak, in the condition of the civilised world at that time. Look at the Roman empire. The most tremendous civil wars that ever were fought had just ended, leaving all their scars and sores behind. "If ever we were to judge of God's moral judgment," says a great Roman historian, "exclusively from the varying fortunes of good and bad men, there are few instances of successful wickedness which would more disturb our faith than that of the long and

peaceful reign of Augustus Cæsar, whose word rules the earth." Look, again, at the dying and worn-out condition of the old pagan religion. Or look at the Jewish nation, with its sects of Pharisees and Sadducees, the religion of Moses and Isaiah falling away into a discussion of the most minute ceremonial of dress and food and posture, a fierce fanaticism taking possession of the whole people. It was in some respects the darkest period of the Gentile-Jewish world, the dulness before the dawn. "God sent forth His Son." He was a Teacher unlike the generation from which He sprang, yet specially suited to the needs of the generation. "I dreamt a dream," says one of the most gifted writers of the last century, the famous Rousseau. "I saw the temples and altars of the ancient world in all their splendour. I looked, and they had vanished, and in their place I saw standing a young Teacher, full of grace and truth. He had not attacked them; He had not destroyed them; but by His own intrinsic excellence and majesty He had superseded them, and there was no one to dispute His right." This is the true description of the aspect of Jesus Christ towards the darker side of the old world. And what was His aspect towards the brighter side? Almost everything there was of good in it took courage, was revived and assimilated and strengthened by Him. The long-unexampled peace under Augustus Cæsar, the organic unity of the civilised world under his sceptre, gave a framework into which the Gospel could fit and spread without hindrance or violence.

II. Such a fulness of time, such a craving of the empty human heart, such a providential preparation, as occurred on the first birthday of Christianity cannot be re-enacted, but in each successive age and in each individual there is in a certain sense a return of the fulness and a reproduction of the coming. In each successive age, even in this age of our own, there is something like it. In every age the glad tidings of great joy is but the moral element of human nature as the true representative and vehicle of Divinity. Where this is to be found in any degree, there in some degree is the manifestation of the Godhead and a child of God. Where it is not found, whatever else there may be, there the supreme Divinity is not. Where it is found in the highest degree, there is God incarnate; there is the true Son of the universal Father.

A. P. STANLEY, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 851.

REFERENCE: iv. 4-6. — G. Hester, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 11.

Chap. iv., ver. 6.—"And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

TRINITY Sunday.

I. God is our *Father*. Our Lord and His Apostles are constantly impressing this truth upon us. By doing so they bring the conception of God home to the very humblest and most ignorant of His creatures. They plant it firmly in the heart, in the seat of those affections of which no child of man is destitute. As the Creator and Sustainer and Ruler of the world, God would claim our allegiance and reverence; but allegiance and reverence, if paid to mere power and wisdom, are sure to degenerate into superstitious terror. But let us be once assured of the love no less than of the power and wisdom of our God, and then we are privileged and drawn to love also, and love casts out slavish fear.

II. And then, with affections and instincts thus prepared, we are fitted to apprehend the goodness of the Father in sending His Son to teach us more about Him and to enable us to come nearer to Him. Christ came to draw away the thick veil which the inborn corruption of the human heart and the accumulated sins and falsehoods of centuries had interposed between man and God. That we might understand God, it was necessary that we should see Him as one of ourselves, tried by temptations; victorious over temptations; suffering for us and suffering with us; bowed down, though not overcome, by the load of sin under which the whole world staggers. So, and so only, could our thoughts of God be at once adequate and clear, and permanently operative on our conduct.

III. It is the action of the Spirit of God's Son on our hearts that encourages us to approach the throne of God and fling our cry before the Invisible One, "Abba, Father." We cannot enter into the Fatherly character of God without being animated by the same Spirit that animated His well-beloved Son, Jesus. We must be like Christ, we must be very brothers of Christ, if we would claim His Father as our Father.

H. M. BUTLER, *Harrow Sermons*, p. 298.

REFERENCES: iv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiv., No. 1435; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 64; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 339.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."

GOD'S Offspring.

I. Men were children before Christ came, ignorant and

unable to take care of themselves. St. Paul told the heathen Athenians that they were God's children. He put them in mind that one of their own heathen poets had told them so, and had said, "We are also God's offspring." And so in this chapter he says, You were God's children all along, though you did not know it. You were God's heirs all along, though you differed in nothing from slaves, for as long as you were in your heathen ignorance and foolishness God had to treat you as His slaves, not as His children; and so you were in bondage under the elements of the world till the fulness of time was come.

II. Therefore is every child that comes into the world baptised freely into the name of God. Baptism is a sign and warrant that God loves that child, that God looks on it as His child, not for itself or its own sake, but because it belongs to Jesus Christ, who by becoming a man redeemed all mankind, and made them His property and His brothers. Therefore every child, when it is brought to be baptized, promises repentance and faith when it comes to years of understanding. It is not God's slave, as the beasts are; it is God's child. No slavish, terrified, superstitious coaxing and flattering will help us with God. He has told us to call Him our Father, and if we speak to Him in any other way we insult Him, and trample under foot the riches of His grace.

III. This thought and the peace which it brings, St. Paul tells us, is none of our own; we did not put it into our own hearts, from God it comes, that blessed thought that He is our Father. We could never have found it out for ourselves. It is the Spirit of the Son of God, the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, which gives us courage to say, "Our Father which art in heaven," which makes us feel that these words are true, and must be true, and are worth all other words in the world put together: that God is our Father, and we are His sons.

C. KINGSLEY, *Sermons for the Times*, p. 213.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 90; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 230. iv. 9.—Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 120. iv. 15.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 128; S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 115; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 248.

Chap. iv., ver. 16.—"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

THE Right Mode of Giving and Receiving Reproof.

I. Men will profess, and perhaps unthinkingly believe, that they derive the most essential benefits derivable from a true

friend; but if he shall offer to impart them he becomes an enemy. The great cause of this perversity and repugnance is that it cannot be but the plain truth (by whatever voice) must say many things that are unpleasing. All censure is so, as it hurts the most quick, and delicate, and constant of all feelings, self-love. And censure! who dares to say in how many points the full unmitigated application of truth to him would not be censure? And who dares to say how many of these points might not be struck upon by a clear-sighted friend, that should unreservedly express the truth? Hence the disposition to regard him as an enemy. Other things contributing to this feeling towards him are (1) a want of the real, earnest desire to be in all things set right; (2) pride, reacting against a fellow-mortal and fellow-sinner; (3) a difference of judgment on the matters in question; (4) an unfavourable opinion or surmise as to the motives of the teller of this truth.

II. (1) Those who have to tell unpleasant truth should well exercise themselves to understand what they speak of. (2) It should be the instructor's aim that the authority may be conveyed in the truth itself, and not seem to be assumed by him as the speaker of it, that he may be the mere conveyer of the force of the subject. (3) The teller of unpleasing truths should watch to select favourable times and occasions (*mollia tempora fandi*) when an inquisitive or docile disposition is most apparent, when some circumstance or topic naturally leads without formality or abruptness to the point, when there appears to be in the way the least to put the person reproved in the attitude of pride and hostile self-defence.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, 1st series, p. 43.

REFERENCE: iv. 16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96.

Chap. iv., ver. 18.—"But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you."

CHRISTIAN Zeal Commended.

I. Zeal may be defined as the heat or fervour of the mind, prompting its vehemence of indignation against anything which it conceives to be evil-prompting, its vehemence of desire towards anything which it imagines to be good. In itself it has no moral character at all. It is the simple instinct of energetic nature, never wholly divested of a certain rude nobility and never destitute of influence upon the lives and upon the characters of others. Zeal in itself is neither morally excellent nor morally blameworthy, and it becomes Christian zeal only

when it springs from Christian motive, when it is displayed in a Christian manner, when it is used for Christian ends. The great constraining motive of Christian zeal, as of every other grace or energy that is hallowed, is the love of God shed abroad in the heart, and kindling a pure, disinterested, brotherly love to the fellow-man. All true Christian zeal bears this mark. The chief object of Christian zeal will be the spread of the religion of Jesus, that which is the great cementing bond of all social relations here, and which links them in a higher fellowship with the brotherhood of heaven.

II. The pith of the Apostle's warning lies in this: "It is good to be zealously affected *always* in a good thing." The Galatians in the presence of the Apostle were warm and extravagant in their professions of attachment both to himself and to the cause to which he had given his life; but they needed his presence. They needed his presence to prevent the relapse of their affections into indifference, nay, not only into indifference, but into opposition, inveterate in proportion to their former enthusiasm. He therefore reminds them that zeal, to be valuable, should be permanent; that it should not be based upon the shifting sand of favourable circumstances, but rooted in a well-principled conviction which, like a rock, will be granite to the storm as well as granite to the sunshine.

III. Note the profitableness of Christian zeal: "It is good." No higher praise can be given to it. Where the heart preserves the ardour of devotion, it will preserve the ardour of enterprise, and will always be at work for the best interests of men.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 14.

REFERENCES: iv. 19—R. F. Horton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 71; H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, 5th series, p. 7. iv. 20.—G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 379. iv. 22-31.—*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 405. iv. 23.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 143. iv. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol ii., No. 69: J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 130. iv. 25, 26.—B. Jowett, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 385.

Chap. iv., ver. 28.—"We, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise."

THE Promise Fulfilled for Time and Eternity.

I. The promise of God to Abraham did more than give civilisation to men: it opened to them the doors of heaven. Great as have been the temporal gifts bestowed by it, greater and better are its spiritual blessings. The best commentary

that has ever been written on the promise made to Abraham is to be found in Heb. xi. St. Paul is never weary of pointing to the glorious character of this spiritual promise. "God," says St. Augustine, "is patient, for God is eternal," and so also the faith that trusts the promise of God partakes of the unchangeable calm of Him on whom it rests, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Canaan, the heavenly Canaan, was ever before the ancient saints, though they knew that to reach it they must cross the dark valley. Clear before their eyes shone the reward of their labours, but they saw that it was set on the top of a cross.

II. We too are children of promise; but often we forget this, and flatter ourselves that some special object on which our desires are set will one day disclose to us the secret of abiding happiness. If we set our hearts on some earthly Canaan, we shall find that the only rest it will give us is the rest of the grave. Consistently with the splendour of the goal that is set before us and the feebleness of all human effort to reach it, God has decreed that our happiness on earth should consist rather in working than in enjoying, rather in using the means than in gaining the end. If from the last sleep there were no awakening, if the night of death were followed by no dawn, then, indeed, the outlook before us would be sad and gloomy. But to us it has been given to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. His risen body sheds the true light upon life and its work; it fulfils to us all the promise of good fortune, and adds to its fulfilment the glories of eternity.

D. HAIG-BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 257.

REFERENCES: iv. 28.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 89; C. J. Vaughan, *Words of Hope*, p. 149. iv. 31.—A. Barry, *Cheltenham College Sermons*, p. 190; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 144; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 263; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96. v. 1.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 90; J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 337; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 22. v. 1-13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 330; F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 145. v. 3, 4.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 75. v. 4.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 349. v. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1228.

Chap. v., ver. 6.—"In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith that worketh by love."

I. THE first grand principle contained in these words is that faith working by love makes a Christian. (1) Religion is the

harmony of the soul with God, and the conformity of the life to His law. (2) If we look backward from character and deed to motive, this harmony with God results from love becoming the ruling power of our lives. (3) The dominion of love to God in our hearts arises from faith.

II. The Apostle's words affirm that in comparison with the essential faith all externals are infinitely unimportant.

III. There is a constant tendency to exalt these unimportant externals into the place of faith.

IV. When an indifferent thing is made into an essential, it ceases to be indifferent, and must be fought against. Whenever parties or Churches insist on external rites as essential or elevate any of the subordinate means of grace into the place of the one bond which fastens our souls to Jesus and is the channel of grace as well as the bond of union, then it is time to arm for the defence of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom and to resist the attempt to bind on free shoulders the iron yoke. Let men and parties do as they like so long as they do not turn their forms into essentials. But "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love."

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 207.

FAITH.

I. Faith is the foundation of the whole spiritual building, whereby we are built on Christ Jesus. It is the root of the whole spiritual life of grace, the ground whereon the soul rests securely, the beginning of our spiritual existence. Faith goes even before love in thought, but not in deed. It goes before love in thought, for we love because we believe, not believe because we love. To faith which loves things seen fade from sight: things heard fall dull upon the ear; it will be unmoved by all outward things, for it has an inward sight, and an inward hearing, and an inward touch, whereby it beholds Christ dying on the cross for love of us, and in the shadow of His cross feels itself protected and healed. The cross is not far off, not over the seas, in the Holy Land, nor removed by length of time. Faith sees it close at hand, and clasps it, and loves it, and is crucified on it to Him.

II. Love is in all true faith, as light and warmth are in the ray of the sun. So soon as faith is kindled in the heart, there is the glow of love, and both come from the same Sun of righteousness pouring in faith and love together into the heart,

and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. With the increase of love, faith increaseth. But love liveth by good works. Love cannot live torpidly. Even in human love, love which never did deeds of love would grow dull and die. We love those most to whom we do most good. Love is perhaps increased more by doing than by receiving good, at least by doing good out of the love of God. "Faith worketh" (literally "inworketh"; the word means, worketh in the very soul itself) "by love."

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. ii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: v. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvi., No. 1553; vol. xxix., No. 1750; vol. xxii., No. 1280; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 251; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 92; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 8th series, p. 37; J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, p. 152.

Chap. v., ver. 7.—**"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?"**

SPIRITUAL Declension.

I. The first test to which we would bring the professing Christian who is anxious to determine whether he is ceasing to run well is that furnished by secret prayer and the study of God's word. If any one is beginning to abbreviate the seasons of private devotion, reading a chapter or two less of the Bible, spending fewer moments in meditation, in self-examination, and in supplication for others and himself, and all not because he has less time at his disposal, but less will to devote to such occupations, let that man look at once to his state. He did run well; who has hindered him? But take other symptoms, equally decisive, though perhaps more easily overlooked. There is no feeling stronger in the genuine Christian than that of desire to promote God's glory in the salvation of his fellow-men. But suppose him to become comparatively indifferent to the diffusion of the Gospel, who will say that there is no abatement of the running well? who will deny the spiritual declension?

II. Note the dangers of the state which is thus described. We cannot but suppose that the Spirit is more displeased when neglected by one on whom He has effectually wrought, than when resisted by another with whom He has striven in vain. And the lukewarm man is useless to himself and to others: to himself, for such a religion as his will never save him; to others, for such a religion will not enable him to be instrumental in the saving of his fellow-men. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1561.

I. Christendom is full of Christians with no outstanding sin nor yet with one grace; whose whole life is one blank; with whom man finds no fault, and in whom God finds no fruit; who day by day are gaining nothing, and so are day by day losing everything; on whom nothing makes any impression, because they have become dulled to all; unpained, but it is the painlessness of a mortified wound; undisturbed, but it is a death-sleep; in repose, because Satan is no longer restless when he has entered into the house whence he was cast out, and has taken up his abode there.

II. Others, again, lose grace, in that they expose themselves to the temptations of pleasure, wherein they before lost it. Sin finds entrance more easily where it has found it before. The will is weakest there, temptation strongest. People do not mean to fall into the sin of which they have repented, but tinder catches any spark. The soul which knows sin may be kindled by anything which recalls the past sin. It is an awful gift to have recovered grace; it is a precious mercy of God to be again entrusted with that grace which we had before forfeited, but the more precious it is, the more carefully it is to be guarded. Carelessness before a fall may be ignorance, passion, infirmity of nature; carelessness after you have been restored from falling is sin against light: it is to reject the mercy of God in Christ.

III. Another frequent cause of forfeiting the grace of God is that people think that it will abide with them as a matter of course, and are not watchful to retain it; and so, as a matter of course, they lose it. It is part of love to be watchful, not to do what Christ forbids, to be alive to every wile of Satan which might even for a moment separate us from the love of Christ.

E. B. Pusey, *Parochial and Cathedral Sermons*, p. 61.

References: v. 7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 349; G. Brooks, *Outlines of Sermons*, p. 314; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 135. v. 11.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 22; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 93. v. 11-26.—*Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 80. v. 12.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 375. v. 13.—E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 324; D. Burns, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 88; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 56; W. G. Horder, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiii., p. 24. v. 13-18.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 243. v. 14.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 131. v. 14-16.—*Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 186. v. 15, 16.—H. Scott-Holland, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 284; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 156; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 359. v. 16.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 121; C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 43; S. Pearson, *Christian*

World Pulpit, vol. iv., p. 139; H. S. Paterson, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 309; Phillips Brooks, *Sermons*, p. 353. v. 16, 17.—E. White, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 157; C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 422; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 263; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 54.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—"For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one with the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

THE Conflict of the Christian Life.

Observe—

I. The nature of the conflict. The struggle of the watchful, ever-lusting flesh against the spirit is a matter of the commonest Christian experience. The sense of obligation rouses the spirit of revolt; the knowledge that a thing is forbidden makes us covet it the more. But is it not also a matter of Christian experience that the spirit lusteth against the flesh? Victories that have not been secured by many an hour of thought and watching have been made ours in a flush of enthusiasm. The revolt against command is checked by the passion for submission. They are not altogether sad words in our text, "Ye cannot do the things that ye would," for again and again, when men have resolved upon some wickedness, when they have silenced their scruples and put down conscience, even in the act of executing their sinful purpose, the unquenchable spirit has been known to speak, making them ashamed of their baseness and folly, sending them fleeing from their sin to their Saviour.

II. The purpose of the conflict. Our text is one of those passages on which much light has been thrown by the progress of Greek scholarship since the translation of the Bible into English. Almost all the best commentators are agreed that it should be rendered, not "so that ye cannot," but "in order that ye may not," do the things that ye would. The conjunction is one most forcibly expressive of design; the opposition between the flesh and the spirit is intended by God. He permits the flesh to lust against the spirit; He inspires the lust of the spirit against the flesh, in order that we may not do whatever we may wish, and simply because we wish it. The victory God is giving us is not of reason over natural temperament nor of heart over head; it is the victory of the spirit over the flesh. The new Divine nature, having subdued all lustfulness, reigns supreme by heart and head, by sanctity of thought and impulse, of passion and resolve.

A. MACKENNAL, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 264.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—"So that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

THERE are three senses in which these words may be taken (1) They may mean generally, There is a spirit in you ruling your whole mind and being; and to the sovereign power of that spirit you are in all things only a passive subject, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would; or (2) we may use them for humiliation and admonition. The nature which still remains in you is too strong to let you live up to all your higher aspirations: "so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Or (3) if you are a child of God, a Spirit, a Holy Ghost, is in you, and the Spirit is too active and too strong to suffer you to follow your own worst will, so that, though you wish it, you cannot do the things that you would. I believe the last to be the true construing.

I. No one who knows anything of human nature or of his own heart can doubt for a moment that the ninth article of our Church is thoroughly and literally true, and that "the infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated, whereby the lust of the flesh, called in the Greek *phronema sarkos*, which some do expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God." The process of sanctification is not the extirpation of sin at all; it is the subjugation of sin. The Philistines are yet in the land, in their strongholds, though the land belong to the people of God.

II. The way to subdue sin is to introduce a master power. You will never actually destroy the wrong will; but you must neutralise it by another will. You must bring in and cultivate and enlarge the prohibitive and the preventive forces of the heart, till at last you would come to the state that "ye cannot do the things that ye would."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 212.

REFERENCES: v. 17.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 754; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 259; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 601; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 360. v. 18.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 252. v. 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p 10. v. 22.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 94; vol. iv., p. 124; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxvii., No. 1582; vol. xxx., No. 1782; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 313; vol. xxxvi., p. 309; J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 15.

Chap. v., vers. 22, 23.

THE Fruits of the Spirit.

I. Every tree is known by its fruit. And just so it is with

us. The Bible often speaks about men as trees. Our root is the heart; the heart is the root of every man and of every man's life; and according then to what the heart is will be the life. Now what is the fruit of the Spirit? It is the fruit of a heart that has been renewed by the Spirit of God. God does not begin at the outside, at the circumference, but with the heart. He makes the acts and deeds right by making the heart right; He makes and keeps the tongue right by making the heart right. There is the difference between man's way and God's. Man begins at the outside, and tries to work towards the centre; God begins at once in the centre and in the heart, and by changing the heart He changes the life; and so Christ's word to Nicodemus is Christ's word to every man, "Ye must be born again."

II. Notice that in this particular list the fruits of the Spirit are dispositions. Paul in this particular passage is not dealing with actions, with deeds, but with dispositions—love, joy, and so on, till you come to meekness and temperance—dispositions, not activities. Then, further, he is not telling us of *all* the dispositions that result from the indwelling of the Spirit of God in our breasts, but only of *some* of them. We are taken by the Apostle into a particular sphere of life, and are shown what the dispositions are belonging to that sphere. He is referring to the Galatian Churches as communities of men and women associated together in the profession of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is taking us into the sphere of Christian fellowship and Christian intercourse; and the dispositions which he names are the dispositions produced by the Spirit among Christian men and women in their social intercourse one with another, in their Church fellowship and Church life.

J. Culross, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 43

The Fruit of the Spirit.

I. The Holy Spirit always clusters His work; one Christian virtue necessarily raises up another; there is no such thing as sanctification in a single point. But as one berry in a bunch of grapes cannot ripen but that the others ripen too, so it is with the Christian. Try to eradicate one sin of your character, and you will invariably find that in doing it you will weaken, if you do not pull up, another. Cultivate one good trait, and you will be surprised to find how many more seem to grow up, you scarcely know how, at its side. So that often this is the best way to carry on one's own edification: to concentrate one's

prayers and self-discipline upon one particular point of attainment, not only because by that fixedness we shall best secure the growth and the attainment which we desire, but also because by cherishing that one excellence we shall promote all.

II. In the outer world, all the vicissitudes of the seasons and the weather go to make the harvest. Do you wonder in the spiritual husbandry, where such fruits as these have to be wrought, that there must be sometimes the bracing cold of a stern adversity, alternating with the warmer rays of summer hours? Can it be but that the sap of the Spirit shall be set free to flow by the winds which blow on us, and that we shall be cleansed by many a storm which is sent, for this very reason, to sweep over us? The wise man prayed that his soul might be subject to the changes of a moral atmosphere: "Awake, O north wind, and come, thou south; blow upon our garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." And then—the far end of all"—Let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruits." J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 5th series, p. 26.

REFERENCES: v. 22, 23.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 239; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, pp. 13-113; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 164; *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 169; *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 51. v. 22-26.—*Ibid*, vol. vi., p. 83; R. W. Dale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 116. v. 24.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1239. v. 25.—*Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 262.

Chap. vi., ver. 1.—"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

I. In considering the duty of restoring the lost and criminal, let us note, first, the spirit in which it is to be performed: "Restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Surely this is the very opposite to the spirit of the world. That spirit refuses to consider the possibility of ourselves being tempted, parades a challenge in the face of the world to question our own purity and inviolability, and declares that we are determined never to admit the hypothesis of our becoming like the sinful. We have to put on a spirit directly contrary to that which we find around us in the world, to sit at the feet of a far different Teacher, and learn of Him. Our blessed Lord spent His life and shed His blood in devising means whereby His lost ones might be recovered to Him; and every follower of His is exhorted not to look only on his own things, but also on the things of others.

II. There was one law in which our blessed Lord summed up His social and practical precepts, one which peculiarly belongs to Him: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them." In by far the greater number of cases of discharged prisoners it is to be feared that evil influence prevails, and they relapse into crime; but there is a remnant in whom there is a desire, more or less earnest, to regain as much as may be of what has been lost. The whole world is against them, but we should open our doors to them, and encourage them. We should look on the fallen as our brethren, bearing their burdens, instead of disclaiming them and letting them sink under their weight, and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vii., p. 195.

REFERENCES: vi. 1.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 340; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 143; E. Johnson, *Ibid.*, vol. xiv., p. 262; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 22. vi. 1, 2.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 378; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 80. vi. 1-5.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 217.

Chap. vi., ver. 2.—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

I. WE must take this text into the sphere of realism; that is, we must not touch trouble sentimentally. There are some people in the world who are curious about a trouble. Be very careful with these people. Many a man has been sorry afterwards that he has admitted the curious into the privacy of his thoughts. Bear ye one another's burdens, and you will know how heavy are the things which you touch.

II. We must do this with great tact and delicacy of feeling. There is a pride that is honourable and beautiful. Men dislike patronage, and to patronise is a subtle fault, a common fault. Very delicate must be our relation to one in trouble, in order that we may reverence the soul of our brother, and never lower his honour while we are helping his need.

III. We must do this as the law of life. It is not to be a solitary action, however beautiful, because separate actions do not make good men. The beauty of the Christian spirit is this: that we have no escape from its common constancy; there is nothing occasional in it.

IV. We must look at this great teaching along the line of true social economy. Let your sympathy with the burdened begin where there is sorrow, shame, and grief; then let your pity go, and then you will find that the Bible, instead of being

an empty social economy, is the only true social economy in the world.

V. We must do all this with a tender sense of brotherhood. In sympathy with and bearing one another's burdens, we realise the great fact that we shall have burdens to bear ourselves. Everything is to be in the spirit of mutuality.

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 58.

THE way of self-isolation, in other words of selfishness, may present itself as the more excellent way to some; it may seem the most prudent course: and yet we act not less blindly than guiltily when we choose it.

I. This same selfishness, this same isolation of ourselves, which shuts us up against the sorrows of others, shuts us up also against their joys. If the one fountain is sealed, so will also be the other. He who will not weep with them that weep, neither shall he rejoice with them that rejoice; and thus there are sealed from him the sources of some of the purest and truest delights which the heart of man can entertain, namely, the pleasure which we derive from the happiness of others. But then, further, it is a course as blind as it is sinful, because all experience proves that the man who lays his account to live an easy, pleasurable life by knowing nothing, by refusing to know anything, of the cares, troubles, and distresses of others, is never able to carry out this scheme of his to a successful end. In strange ways he is sure to be baffled and defeated in this his guilty dream of a life lived like that of the Epicurean gods, the life of one looking down as from a superior height upon a vast weltering world of labour and sorrow and pain beneath him. "Care finds the careless out." He who resolves not to bear any part of the burdens of his fellows resolves not to fulfil the law of Christ.

II. Bear ye the burden of one another's sins. In one sense Christ only can do this. What must we do, if we would bear this burden for another? We must not soon be provoked; we must be patient towards all men, accepting that which their sin may lay upon us as part of that burden which sinners dwelling among sinners must expect to bear. So, too, we bear the burden of other men's sins when we take trouble, endure toil and pain and loss, in seeking their restoration, when, at however remote a distance from our Lord, we too follow them into the wilderness, that so, it may be, we may find, and having found, may bring them home again.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons in Ireland*, p. 77.

I. POVERTY is a burden which we may lighten. It cannot be reasonably questioned that poverty is a great disadvantage and constitutes a great pressure on the poor. It prevents the acquisition of knowledge; it quenches the nobler strivings; it wears the body with toil, withholds the sustenance of strength; it makes life a drudgery. When very deep it is twin sister to famine, and behind them both are the darker forms of crime. "Lest I be poor and steal," is the argument by which the wise man's prayer, "Give me not poverty," is sustained. No thoughtful loving man can say that that is a state in which men ought to be content or in which we ought to be content to see them. It is a great burden, and we are to bear it with them and for them.

II. Infirmity is a burden. The list of human infirmities is a very long one; the category of faults does not soon come to an end. Now, taking the more evident among them, how are we to deal with them? This passage tells us clearly. Whenever restoration is possible we are to restore in the spirit of meekness. If a man shall fall in any measure from integrity, or from charity, or from truthfulness of speech, or from purity of behaviour, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. Bear his burden until you bear it away, and it is his burden no longer. Go to him on the side of his infirmity, not to reproach and curse, but to heal and help.

III. The burden of trouble. All that we understand by trouble may be borne more or less by one for another. If every Christian man would put himself, according to the measure of his ability, in sympathy with all the trouble of his friends, what a lightening of that trouble there would be, what a dropping away of burdens, and what a glory cast around the burdens that remain! It would be as if the Saviour were personally present in ten thousand homes. There is, perhaps, nothing in which we are more deficient than in due readiness and fulness of Christian sympathy.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 315.

REFERENCES: vi. 2.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 253; C. Kingsley, *Village Sermons*, p. 149; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 343; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 86; W. J. Knox-Little, *Characteristics of Christian Life*, p. 140; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 283; T. L. Cuyler, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 33; Bishop Temple, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 264; E. M. Goulburn, *Occasional Sermons*, p. 18.

Chap. vi., vers. 2, 5.

I. ST. PAUL combines in this passage the two great ideas on which all previous morality had been based: the one self-

preservation, self-development, that is to say, that out of which the sense of responsibility grows; the other self-forgetfulness, that is to say, that out of which all effort for other people grows. It combines them in a complete harmony. "Bear ye one another's burdens," is the rule of self-forgetfulness; "Every man should bear his own burden," is the simple rule of self-preservation. And because the harmony between these two statements is so hard to preserve, because in the agony that is caused by self-reflection we are so liable to be carried away by the one to the exclusion of the other, it may be well to consider this apparent paradox.

II. This apparent diversity between "Bear ye one another's burdens" and "Let every man bear his own burden" is always meeting us and always challenging us. It looks at us under the name of individualism or humanism in every modern philosophical treatise that we read, or it comes to us in some of the smallest personal questions of our daily life. The solution of the problem was the despair of the old world before Christianity came. Greek philosophy, from beginning to end, is rampant individualism. The very antithesis to this is the Buddhist system. On the face of it, Buddhism appears to be the most refined form of what is called humanism. But about the theoretical self-abandonment of Buddhism there is this fatal defect: that directly it becomes practical it is found to aim at mere self-crushing, at what is neither more nor less than suicide. Christ's religion escapes mere Buddhist universalism. Go out, says St. Paul, from yourselves to help others; bear their burdens, restore them by the magic touch of fellowship in the spirit of meekness. Fling your soul away into the struggles and sorrows of others, and so fulfil the law of Him who, in the highest sense, bare their sorrows. The more sympathetic you become, the more will self-reflection grow; the more will you find the truth of the great paradox that those who lose their life for Christ's sake even now will find it.

PREBENDARY EYTON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 49.

REFERENCES: vi. 2 5.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 154; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 560; W. Williamson, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 330. vi. 4.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 322.

Chap. vi., ver. 5 (with Ps. lv. 22).—"For every man shall bear his own burdens."

THE Apostle reminds us in this verse that there are some burdens which cannot be shared, which each must bear for himself alone,

I. The burden of personality can be borne only by the man himself. That is "his own burden." Of course this truth is surrounded and connected with other truths which limit and qualify it, and put it into harmonious relationship with God and man. Each individual is open to manifold influence, may be impressed, drawn, turned, melted, inflamed, according to the powers that play on him; but he is *himself* in all. No part of his being is drawn away from him, however sensibly and powerfully its relations may be affected. He receives no essential part of the being of others into his own. He abides in the eye of God a separate, complete, individual soul for ever. "Every man shall bear his own burden."

II. The burden of responsibility is borne always by the individual man. The responsibility arises of necessity out of the personality, because the personality holds in it the elements of moral life. Man is moral, and therefore responsible. We live in the mass, but we are judged one by one. We act and interact, give and take, all day long and our whole life through; but each, at every moment, stands responsibly before God: and to each God says, as He did to Daniel, "*Thou* shalt stand in *thy* lot at the end of the days."

III. Every man shall bear his own burden of guilt. It is his own burden, and if he does not avail himself of the means of deliverance righteously and graciously provided, it will be his burden for evermore.

IV. Immortality is a man's own burden. Before any soul a man might stand and say, "O king, live for ever," crowned and robed amid the glories of the eternal kingdom or discrowned and in disgrace, a wreck of life, yet living on, for every man shall bear his own burden of immortality for ever. Christ, the Son of God, became incarnate that He might stand by our side, our almighty, loving Helper; and now we can lean on Him, "the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and bear all our burdens and yet walk with elastic step, and take His yoke upon us, too, and find it to be easy, His burden, and prove it light.

A. RALEIGH, *Quiet Resting Places*, p. 331.

Chap. vi., ver. 5 (with Gal. vi. 2; Ps. lv. 22).

I. "EVERY man shall bear his own burden." Some burdens are inseparably attached to us; deliverance from them is as impossible as life would be without air and exercise and cold water. We must bear them; there is no help for it. Between

the wicket-gate and the gate of glory John Bunyan put the hill of difficulty. God puts between the two gates, for you and me, many difficulties. Difficulties strengthen; they compact a man's faith; they sinew his soul; they make him Christlike. This death-grapple sometimes with difficulty gives us force, and the loads which God lays upon us teach us lessons to be learned in no other school. The hardest lesson for every one of us to learn is this: to let God have His own way and trust Him in the dark.

II. "Bear ye one another's burdens." We have seen how the carrying of our own load gives us strength. There are other loads that we could help our fellow-creatures to carry, and that service is to teach us that beautiful grace sympathy. Happily we have here the reason for it: "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." That law is love. Christ is love. We must carry His law into practice every day if we would prove that, while we profess and call ourselves Christians, we are worthy of the title.

III. "Cast thy burden on the Lord." God does not release you from the performance of duty, but He will sustain you in doing it. The load shall not crush you; nay, rather it shall sinew your graces, and send you forth more thoroughly furnished for God's work here and glory hereafter. Trust means that when we take up the burden we lean on the Burden-bearer, though unseen, assured that He shall never fail in His promise, "My grace shall be sufficient for you."

T. L. CUYLER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 33.

REFERENCE: vi. 5.—J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 209.

Chap. vi., ver. 7.—"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

CHRISTIAN Diligence.

I. The Christian sows to the Spirit, not to the flesh. Let us try to give a plain, practical interpretation to these words. The sowing being interpreted to mean the thoughts, words, and acts of this present life, the Christian thinks, speaks, and acts with reference to the Spirit; to his higher, his Divine, part; to that part of him which, being dwelt in by God's Holy Spirit, aims at God's glory, loves Him, serves Him, converges to Him in its desires and motions. Herein he altogether differs from the unchristian man, who sows to the flesh, consults in his thoughts, words, and acts, the desires of the body and the passing interests of the world. Now *how* does the Christian sow? In discouragement, in difficulty, with effort and with

endurance, against nature and against temptation. His seed-time is a time of labour, not of repose; of self-denial, not of ease; of hope, not of enjoyment. But these seeds thus planted are, by the power of the same creative Spirit, in the ground vivified, and expanded, and made to yield a thousandfold, yea to bear unceasing fruit to all eternity.

II. If all our life be the seed-time of eternity, youth is, in a narrower sense, especially the seed-time of life, and thus of eternity too. Educate for God, in the wide sense which I would always give to those words; teach God's word, and God's works, and God's ways; and unfold God's powers which are latent in the living subjects of your teaching. Educate the young for God; teach them that their religious life is all their life, that thousands of thoughts and words and acts belong to God upon which His name is not ordinarily inscribed; that not only in the high culture of their spirits, but in the tillage of the underlying fields of the mind, of the judgment, the understanding, the imagination, the fancy, and in temperance, soberness, and chastity of the still humbler region of the body, they must be sowing to life everlasting.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 122.

SIN and its Punishment.

I. Against all delusions about sin, St. Paul utters the solemn words of the text. The word for "mocked" implies the most unseemly and insulting gesture; and God is mocked when we pretend to be His while we cut our being in twain and give the better half to Satan, when we draw nigh unto Him with our lips while our hearts are far from Him, when we are externally scrupulous and internally filled with willing corruption. Before any of us fancy that, though fighting, we are always being defeated by sin, let us ask ourselves whether it really is the one dear, absorbing wish of our souls to stand, not approved to man, but approved to God, and to be pure with God and His own pure souls. Let us not be deceived on the very threshold about this matter, for the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

II. Once again, test your sincerity by the manner in which you control or resist the beginning of all sin which is in evil thoughts. Do you suffer your thoughts to tamper with evil and to dally with wrong-doing? If so, you are not sincere. If you willingly sin in thought, if you are base and guilty there,

then be sure that sooner or later the guilt that is imprisoned will break out into the outlets of word and deed.

III. To promise a certain ultimate victory if you be sincere in the struggle against sin is not the same thing as saying that you will never fall. By reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; but if we be true fighters, when we fall we shall rise again: we shall not lie in the mire, but instantly, shamed into greater watchfulness, we shall make sure of the next victory, and each victory will lead to others until our enemies are all utterly routed.

F. W. FARRAR, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 58.

I. IT is not without a purpose that the solemn truth is so often repeated in God's word that we shall reap in the next world according as we have sown in this one. The foolish mortal who lives to self to self must die. God is not, cannot be, mocked. No one need expect, or even hope, to sow one thing and reap another. Those who recklessly sow to the flesh must reap their harvest: blighted fortune; shattered health; disappointed hopes and soured tempers; infamy and shame. God leaves us free to sow what sort of seed we will, and no one can blame the Almighty that, having chosen our own course, we reap our own harvest. The individual who indulges in one known sin is planting a seed, which will be sure to spring up and grow, and, perhaps, prepare the way for a wider departure from duty. A second and third temptation will prove more irresistible and dangerous than the first.

II. There is an amiable class of people who, without being addicted to any particular vice, are merely distinguished for the skill and success with which they devote themselves to worldly things. They have no doubt that death may soon come and summon them away, but, in spite of his fact, they are sowing no seed for a future and an invisible harvest. The gratification of having succeeded in their cherished plans, the pleasant assurance that the bodily necessities of the time of sickness and old age are provided for, and the admiration of those who have observed the tokens of their worldly prosperity—*these are their harvest.* Is it enough? J. N. NORTON, *Golden Truths*, p. 425.

Chap. vi., ver. 7.—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

I. THERE is none to whom so much mockery is *offered* as God. Men walk on His earth and deny His existence. Others acknowledge His existence, but by their lives defy His power.

Men come to His house of prayer, and there, amidst the rising accents of supplication and praise and the descending message of His word, they think of their farm and their merchandise, or follow in fancy their worldly desires. They go thence, and not a word of that which they have asked is remembered with a view to its answer. And even to the spiritual ordinance of the body and blood of Christ do not men not unfrequently bring unclean hands and an unhallowed heart, and even when the signs of forgiveness and immortality are being administered to them are they not living in unrepented sin and the bondage of corruption? But with all this God is not mocked. His Divine majesty dwells in light unapproachable, far above any stain of pollution or danger of insult from us, the creatures of His almighty will. It is not God, it is our souls, that we mock when we thus tamper with their best and dearest interests. It is ourselves whom we expose to shame and everlasting contempt.

II. How this is the case, the second fact announced by the Apostle may explain to us: "God is not mocked; *for* whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The *present life* is our seed-time. Our hearts and consciences are the field to be sown. By the seed are meant those living principles, whether good or ill, which sink down below the level of the surface, not what men profess, but what men follow. Those seeds spring up and bring forth fruit of one kind or other; that is, they become put into practice in men's lives by the words of their tongues and the works of their hands. The great harvest is the end of the world, when every man's principles shall be judged by every man's works, the seed by the fruit which it shall have brought forth. What he has sown, not what he has professed to sow, will then be seen. The great harvest day shall declare what each man's principles have been in the deep chambers of his heart, and according to that declaration shall his eternal lot be, for happiness or for misery.

H. ALFORD, *Sermons*, p. 113.

REFERENCES: vi. 7.—T. J. Crawford, *The Preaching of the Cross*, p. 98; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 456; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 253; T. Teignmouth Shore, *The Life of the World to Come*, p. 1; J. Vaughan, *Children's Sermons*, 1875, p. 266; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 241.

Chap. vi., vers. 7, 8.

DECEIVED Sowers to the Flesh.

I. The first thing which strikes us in the text is the solemnity of the Apostle's warning. He seems to intimate that such is the audacious wickedness of the human heart that it has within

it so many latent mazes of iniquity that men might be self-deceived either as to their apprehensions of that which was right before God, or as to their own actual condition in His sight; and he tells them that God is not mocked by this pretended service, that to Him all hearts are open, and that in impartial and discriminating arbitration He will render to every man according to his deeds. If there is but a possibility of this, it behoves us to take earnest warning.

II. Consider the import of the Apostle's statement, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," etc. He who would gather the wheat into the garner must scatter the wheat seed in the furrow. Barley and rye will come each from its own seed, and tares, if an enemy stealthily scatter them while the husbandman and his fellows slumber. It is manifest, then, that the great principle which the Apostle would impress upon us is that we have largely the making or the marring of our own future; that in the thoughts we harbour, and in the words we speak, and in the silent deeds which, beaded on time's string, are told by some recording angel as the story of our life from year to year, we shape our character, and therefore our destiny for ever. They who sow for this world reap in this world, and may outlive their own harvests; they who sow to the Spirit seek for abiding issues, and their harvest has not yet come. There are three special kinds of sowers to the flesh whom the Apostle seems to have had in mind: the *proud*; the *covetous*; the *ungodly*. They are all *spiritual* sins—sins of which human law takes no cognisance, and to which codes of earthly jurisprudence affix no scathing penalty. On this very account, however, they are fraught with immeasurably greater danger. There is the greater need that these spiritual sins should be disclosed in all their enormity and shown in their exceeding sinfulness and in their disastrous wages, in order that men may be left without excuse, if they persist wilfully in believing a lie.

W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 253.

I. Note the great law expressed in the text, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." We know that in natural things a man cannot sow wheat and get rye; that he cannot take chaff and cast it over the ground, or drill it in, and expect a crop from that which is not seed at all. Much less, if he were to cast abroad the seeds of what was pernicious and poisonous, if he were to sow thistles and briers and thorns, might he expect that the summer fields would be covered with the promise

of a rich harvest with which his barns would be filled. So in the higher sphere sowing to the flesh will bring corruption in the loss of reputation, character, standing, all! And in a higher sphere still we may reap corruption in the extinction of faith, love, Divine hope, and communion with God, by separation from Him leading to complete incapacity and loss of power for this communion of the soul with its Maker, and that is corruption in its darkest and worst sense.

II. "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The man will best govern the animal when God governs the man, when the man sows to the Spirit in the sense of sowing to the Divine impulse, suggesting, restraining, preventing grace, it may be, operating upon his nature. Do not let us be weary in well-doing. There is often a good while between the seed-time and the harvest, and there may be a good while between the seed-time and the harvest in a man's doing that which is right; but go on: be not weary; in due season you shall reap, if you faint not. The law is as operative and influential on the one side as on the other, in relation to the good as well as to the evil. Therefore, however you may sometimes feel depressed by long and weary waiting for some result, never let that tempt you to falter or to put forth your hand to some iniquity. Be upright, and true, and loyal to Christ and to God, and if the blessing tarry, wait for it; it will come all in due time. It is a good thing for a man both to hope and quietly to wait for the blessings of God.

T. Binney, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, Nos. 487, 488.

Eternal Punishment.

I. The doctrine of eternal punishment ought to be denied, because of its evil fruits. A good tree does not bring forth corrupt fruit, and we owe to this doctrine all the slaughter and cruelty done by alternately triumphant sects in the name of God. So dreadful were its deeds that a door of escape was provided from its full horror by the Church of a former time. The doctrine of purgatory and of prayers for the dead was the reaction from its terrors, and it saved religion. Unrelieved by this merciful interposition, eternal punishment would have slain the world.

II. In denying the eternity of hell, do we in truth destroy the doctrine of retribution? Not at all; we establish it, and are enabled to assert it on clear and reasonable grounds. First, we can believe in it. The heart and the conscience alike refuse to

believe in everlasting punishment. The imagination cannot conceive it; the reason denies its justice. But the retribution taught by the opposite doctrine—that God's punishment is remedial, not final; that it is exacted, but that it ends when it has done its work—is conceivable, is allowed by the heart, for its root is love; is agreed to by the conscience, for it is felt to be just; is accepted of the reason, for it is based on law. In our belief, the ground of retribution is this: that God cannot rest till He has wrought evil out of all spirits, and that this work of His is chiefly done by causing us to suffer the natural consequence of sin. The very root, then, of our belief in the non-eternity of punishment involves an awful idea of punishment. For on this ground God will not cease to be a consuming fire to a man till He has destroyed all his evil. Nor can He cease. The imperative in His nature binds Him to root out evil, and God does His duty by us. Does this view destroy, and not rather assert, retribution?

III. We can all understand that. Introduce evil into your life, and you are introducing punishment. God will not rest till He has consumed it. Sow to the flesh, and you shall of the flesh reap corruption; you shall eat the fruits of your own devices, and find in them your hell. And God will take care that you do. He will not spare a single pang, if only He can bring us to His arms at last. Punishment here and in the world to come is no dream, but a dread reality; but it is strictly and justly given, and it comes to a close. One cry of longing repentance changes its quality, one bitter sorrow for wrong, one quick conviction that God is love and wishes our perfection. But to produce that repentance, and till it is produced, God's painful work on our evil is done and will be done. There is but one truth which can enable us to fight against wrong, and to conquer in the end and give us power, faith, and hope in face of all awful revelations. It is the unconquerable goodness of God, the conviction, deep-rooted as the mountains, of His infinite love and justice, the knowledge that the world is redeemed, the victory over evil won, and that, though the work is slow, not one soul shall be lost for ever. For He shall reign till He hath subdued all things to Himself in the willingness of happy obedience and the joy of creative love.

S. A. BROOKE, *The Unity of God and Man*, p. 45.

REFERENCES: vi. 7, 8.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 96; G. Bladon, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 185; T. Stringer, *Ibid.*, p. 293; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 575; *Ibid.*,

3rd series, vol. iv., p. 173; S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 172; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 189. vi. 7-9.—E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 155.

Chap. vi., ver. 8.—"For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Sowing to the Spirit.

I. The natural man has no desire for immortality. This is the desire which is always assumed in the New Testament as lying at the root of all spiritual life, of all growth in holiness. If a man is to sow to the Spirit, he must first believe in spirit; he must believe that he is a spirit, that he is not a mere part of this world, to vanish away and perish like the herb of the field when his day here is over. But the natural man has not this first great spiritual desire. The natural man is without the proper desire for immortality; the spiritual man, as is ever conspicuously put before us in Scripture, has this desire strong in him, and it is the beginning and the foundation of the religious life which he leads here.

II. But this is the second point that we come to, viz., the sowing to immortality, the laying up in store a good foundation against the time to come, that we may attain eternal life. Those who are convinced of the truth of, and who earnestly desire to reap, this everlasting life, must sow to everlasting life. As soon as the soul is really seized with the desire for everlasting life, the sort of actions which it takes interest in, and which attract it, and which it wants to do for the sake of its own individual prospects and hope of gaining this eternal life, are not any actions connected with profit or greatness in this world, but simply good actions. It is the strong wish to do righteousness, to do duties to God and man, which accompanies the strong desire for immortal life. Why? Because we know that it is goodness alone which is the enduring and immortal thing in man, and that by it alone can we fasten ourselves on to eternity and "lay hold on eternal life."

J. B. Mozley, *Sermons Parochial and Occasional*, p. 203.

Chap. vi., ver. 9.—"And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

Unweariedness in Well-doing.

Let us not be weary in well-doing in consequence of—

I. The rivalry of other workers. (1) Note the undying

activity of the world. There is no mercy for the half-hearted man; he is quickly jostled off the racecourse or crushed to pieces upon it. When a worker has become weary, and can no longer hurry forward or labour at his calling, the world perhaps pauses a moment to push him out of its way, chuckles at the vacant space or released capital, closes over the circle that formed for a moment around him, and hurries on its eager race. (2) If we turn from the unwearying work of the busy world to contemplate the great power of evil, if we try to realise its presence, to separate it in thought from the world which it defiles and seeks to ruin, we are appalled by its ceaseless efforts to accomplish its deadly purpose. Whatever power can afford to rest, the power of evil never grows weary. (3) The energies of goodness never rest nor take their ease. On all hands the numerous and combining ranks of the children of light are taking on them the whole armour of God and going forth to do battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil.

II. The mighty name of Christian combines many of the strongest arguments to unwearying service. (1) The Christian owes his own salvation to unwearied love and infinite sacrifice. (2) Christians are the pledged disciples of the great Worker in this field of holy exertion. (3) Christ Himself lives and works within the Christian by the power of His Spirit.

III. Further incentives to perseverance may be found in the peculiar and insidious character of the temptations to which well-doing is exposed. (1) The man who is resolved to ruin himself has the evil propensities of his fallen nature to help him. On the other hand, well-doing exacts a perpetual conflict with the evil tendencies of our nature. (2) Another of the hindrances to which well-doing of this kind is exposed is the tendency of our machinery to wear out and our own disposition not unfrequently to hurry it off the field. (3) There is weariness in well-doing from the very number of methods by which it may be pursued.

IV. Consider the reason which the Apostle urges for our observance of this injunction. It rests on the great law of God's dealings, the reward of patient labour: "Ye shall reap if ye faint not."

H. R. Reynolds, *Notes on the Christian Life*, p. 334.

The Weary Well-doers.

I. Well-doing is the broad evidence of the Christian calling. We are the Lord's free army to drive the devil's unholy legions

from the earth and to destroy the fruits of his accursed reign. It is the great enterprise of Christ; He came for it, lived for it, died for it, and reigns for it on high. He holds the hope of it as the dearest jewel of His treasure, the warmest passion of His heart. That man can be none of His who, seeing the poor lying wounded in the world's highway, passes by on the other side. Those who can leave the world to struggle on as it may, while they care for their own salvation, utter the most awful blasphemy if they take the name of Christian on their lips. To share Christ's burden here is man's great education for the bliss and glory of eternity.

II. Be not weary in well-doing. Note (1) the causes of weariness: (*a*) The weight of the flesh. The great battle of life is with the heavy, weary, languid flesh, that ties us to the dust. Weariness in well-doing is part of the universal weariness: the slow movement of the flesh under high compulsions; the deadness of the soul itself to truth and Christ and the eternal world. (*b*) The largeness of the problem. (*c*) The immense difficulty and intricacy of the work and the evil it brings in its train. (*d*) The measure in which sorrow is mixed with sin. (*e*) It is thankless work. We might give up our ministry in despair but for the memory that nothing in the way of our carelessness and thanklessness has dulled the zeal of the ministry of the Lord. (2) The reasons which should move us to endure: (*a*) Because such words as these are written in the Bible (Matt. xviii. 21-35); (*b*) because these words are sustained and enforced by the infinite patience and mercy of God; (*c*) this endurance is life's grand lesson; (*d*) there is an end which will fulfil all our hope for humanity in sight.

J. Baldwin Brown, *The Sunday Afternoon*, p. 295.

Against Weariness in Well-doing.

I. One consequence of well-doing, as an argument against weariness, is the consciousness and the joy of pleasing God. This being vividly realised, what cause of weariness might it not be set against? Consider, our Master has other servants, and it should not be absolutely foreign to our consideration (as an argument not to be weary) that the noblest and best of all His creatures are never tired or even remiss. Imagine the stupendous activity, the bright multitudinous agency, every moment, in so many scenes and employments, and from before the beginning of time. And would we have the sovereign Master to look down through all this immensity

and grandeur of action to see us throwing His business aside in disgust?

II. Against being weary, let it be considered what is the fittest introduction and discipline for the other world. On what terms would a thoughtful spirit desire to go into it? Surely so that there should be the greatest delight and fitness. Well, then, if it be considered as a *rest*, labour up to the time, or an *active* scene, bring highly exerted powers. Is it a scene for the triumph of victory? But then the good fight must be maintained up to the very gate. View it as an access to the noblest society, but then the new-comer must have belonged to the best society where he came from. In all reason, we must wish to bring as near as possible together, in likeness as well as time, the habits and spirit of the state we aspire to and those in the state we quit, that it may not be a vast and abrupt change.

III. We shall reap. The persevering faithful will reap the Divine approbation and acceptance, the great Master's final applause. The emphasis of the "Well done!" will not be proportioned to the measure of success, but to the devotedness, diligence, fidelity, perseverance.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 386.

REFERENCES: vi. 9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1383; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 234; C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons chiefly Practical*, p. 207; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 70; W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 33. vi. 9, 10.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 88. vi. 10.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 205; R. H. Hadden, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 4. vi. 11.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 108. vi. 13.—J. C. Gallaway, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 228.

Chap. vi., ver. 14.—"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

I. THERE is a use of the word "cosmos" in Scripture to which the test of its crucifixion by the Cross perfectly answers. This is the cosmos not of nature and not of man as God created either; not the beautiful universe in which philosophers and poets, and simple loving souls which are neither, delight to revel and expatiate; not the race made in God's image, partaking of His intelligence, and His forethought, and His sympathy, and His love, and even in its ruins prognosticating reconstruction; but that aspect, that element, of each which sin has defiled: matter as the foe of spirit and man as the bond-slave of the

devil. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life, this is the world. To have these things in the heart is to be worldly. This is the disease, the threefold disease, which Christ came to heal when He undertook the cure of worldliness.

II. In the crucifixion by the Cross there are two stages. (1) There is, first, a testimony. The Cross is a witness. It gives evidence against the world. The Cross is evidence against the vanity of worldliness; bids the man who would be a man do battle for the thing that is and look for his reward to a world not of shadows and to a life not of time. (2) The Cross is a power too. That ugly, that repulsive, that horrible, object, that frightful, that revolting, execution, that gibbet accursed of God and man, has become the magnet of humanity. Christ foretold it, and it is true. Wheresoever the Gospel of the Cross and the Crucified is preached there are found practical evidences—"infallible proofs" St. Luke would call them—of the power of the Cross to crucify men to the world. Not by trickery or magic, not by accident or machinery, but by the Spirit of the living God, is this influence upon hearts and lives wrought. Christ crucified becomes in His turn the mutual Crucifier of man and the world.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Simple Sermons*, p. 113.

REFERENCES: vi. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1859; Bishop M. Simpson, *Sermons*, p. 241; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 95; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 94; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 397; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 106; vol. iv., p. 164. vi. 14, 15.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., pp. 181, 364. vi. 15.—F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 49; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 449; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. i., p. 80; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 93. vi. 15, 16.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 26.

Chap. vi., ver. 17.—"I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

I. NOTE the conception of the slave of Christ. What lies in that metaphor? Well, it is the most uncompromising assertion of the most absolute authority on the one hand and claim of unconditional subjection and obedience on the other. The Christian slavery, with its abject submission, with its utter surrender and suppression of mine own will, with its complete yielding up of self to the control of Jesus, who died for me, because it is based upon His surrender of Himself to me, and in its inmost essence it is the operation of love, is therefore co-existent with the noblest freedom.

II. Note the marks of ownership. The Apostle evidently

means thereby distinctly the bodily weaknesses and possibly diseases which were the direct consequence of his own apostolic faithfulness and zeal. Every Christian man and woman ought to bear in his or her body, in a plain, literal sense, the tokens that he or she belongs to Jesus Christ. The old law of self-denial, or subduing the animal nature, its passions, appetites, desires, is as true and as needful to-day as it ever was; and for us all it is essential to the purity and loftiness of our Christian life that our animal nature and our fleshly constitution should be well kept down under heel and subdued.

III. Note the glorying in the slavery and its signs. In a triumph that is legitimate, the Apostle solemnly and proudly bears before men the marks of the Lord Jesus. He was proud of being dragged at the Conqueror's chariot-wheels, chained to them by the cords of love, and so he was proud of being the slave of Christ.

IV. Mark the immunity from any disturbance which men can bring which these marks and the servitude they express secure: "From henceforth let no man trouble me." Paul claims that his apostolic authority, having been established by the fact of his sufferings for Christ, should give him a sacredness in their eyes; that henceforth there should be no rebellion against his teaching and his word. In proportion as we belong to Christ and bear the marks of His possession of us, in that measure we are free from the disturbance of earthly influences and of human voices and from all the other sources of care and trouble, of perturbation and annoyance, which harass and vex other men's spirits.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian Commonwealth*, Jan. 21st, 1886.

THE Marks of the Lord Jesus.

These words are the magnificent outburst of a heart filled to the overflow with the spirit of impassioned consecration. The words are the language of a man who has made up his mind so firmly that he is conscious that there is not the faintest possible chance of his ever changing his determination. The "marks" are only so many seals upon a resolution deliberately taken, and so awfully intense in its nature that you may as well argue with a rock and expect to move it by force of your logic, as anticipate effecting the slightest alteration of my determined purpose.

I. This is the language of a devoted servant. The word employed is "stigmata," and the original, the primary, meaning of that word is the brand which the slave bore on his person,

with either the initials, the mark, or the name of his owner. You will see how this illustrates our subject. Let us remember (1) at what a price our Master bought us, for if we remember that we shall glory in bearing the stigmata. (2) Bear in mind how well He has treated us since He did buy us. (3) Remember that we do bear His marks, and that we cannot get rid of them. Play the traitor, if you will, but everybody shall know it. You have received a brand that cannot be effaced.

II. The words are the language of a true-hearted veteran. Although the first and the chief meaning of "stigmata" is the brand the slave bore to show that he was the property of another, yet the word also meant any scar; and the Apostle had this in his mind also. "Do you think I am going to give the Lord up now? Look at what I have endured for Him." He looked upon his scars as so many badges of honour.

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 1015.

REFERENCES: vi. 17.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 95; vol. xxvii., p. 229; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 145; F. E. Paget, *Sermons for Special Occasions*, p. 127.

EPHESIANS.

REFERENCE: i. 1.—W. Alexander, *Church Sermons*, vol. i., p. 289.

Chap. i., vers. 1, 2.

IN these words we have—

I. Paul's description of himself: "an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God." He was not appointed to his office through the intervention of the Church or of those who had been Apostles before him; his call came direct from heaven. Much less had he dared to undertake his great work at the impulse of his own zeal for the honour of Christ and the redemption of men. He was an Apostle "through the will of God." The expression is characteristic of the Pauline theology; Paul believed that the Divine will is the root and origin of all Christian righteousness and blessedness. And this is the secret of a strong, and calm, and effective Christian life. Our spiritual activity reaches its greatest intensity when we are so filled with the glory of the Divine righteousness, the Divine love, and the Divine power that we are conscious only of God, and all thought of ourselves is lost in Him.

II. Having described himself, Paul goes on to describe those to whom the Epistle is written. They are "the saints which are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus." In the early days all Christians were saints. This title did not attribute any personal merit to them; it simply recalled their prerogatives and their obligations. Whenever they were so called they were reminded that God had made them His own. They were holy because they belonged to Him. According to Paul's conception, every Christian man was a temple, a sacrifice, a priest; his whole life was a Sabbath; he belonged to an elect race; he was the subject of an invisible and Divine kingdom; he was a saint. The title implies no personal merit; it is the record of a great manifestation of God's condescension and love.

III. The closing words of the second verse, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,"

belong to too lofty a region to be regarded as merely an expression of courtesy and goodwill. I think that we must call them a benediction. If the true ideal of the Christian life were fulfilled, men would be conscious that whenever we came near to them Christ came near; when we invoked on men the Divine favour and the Divine peace, the invocation would be His rather than ours: it would be spoken in His name, not in our own, and what we spoke on earth would be confirmed and made good in heaven. We have ceased to bless each other because our consciousness of union with Him who alone can make the blessing effective has become faint and dim.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 11.

REFERENCES: i. 1, 2.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 213; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 59.

Chap. i., ver. 3.—"**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.**"

OF the spiritual blessings which we have in Christ we notice—

I. Election. God has chosen us not only that we may be saved from eternal destruction, not only that we may be happy for ever in heaven, but He has chosen us for this special purpose: that we should be holy and without blame before Him. We cannot have before us a nobler, grander object to contemplate than that it is God's purpose to make us holy and without blame before Him, to conform us in spirit and in life to the image of His dear Son.

II. Predestination and adoption. Whatever may be said about all human beings being the children of God, I am inclined to think that there is more of sentiment than of sound Scriptural truth in that notion, for I find it continually set forth in the New Testament that there is a connection between faith in Christ and our becoming children of God. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," says the Apostle Paul, and thus it is that we are adopted and received into the adoption of sons.

III. Redemption. Much as this doctrine is derided at the present time, the fact that He bought us at such a price as His own precious life makes our redemption and eternal life so absolutely secure.

IV. Forgiveness of sins. Christ has not redeemed us from the curse of the law that He might afterwards reproach us for our sins. There comes with the redemption the forgiveness.

There comes with the act of love that saved us from the curse of the law the act of oblivion, in which all sin is forgiven and forgotten.

H. Stowell Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 344.

Chap. i., ver. 3 (with i. 20; ii. 6; iii. 10; vi. 12).—"In heavenly places."

In the Heavenlies.

I. In the heavenlies we have (1) a blessed home. (2) We are quickened together and raised up with Christ. As a result of His thus quickening us together with Christ and raising us up together, God makes us sit together at His own right hand. This involves elevation over all created powers and a share in His absolute sovereignty.

II. The situation of believers in the heavenlies, thus blessed and thus exalted, naturally draws upon them the notice of other beings, of other intelligences, good or evil, who may be capable of understanding what is going on in the heavenlies. The heavenlies now put on the aspect of a theatre or place of exhibition in the view of holy angels, the unfallen inhabitants of heaven. By the Church they have made known to them the manifold wisdom of God.

III. In chap. vi. 12 another change or metamorphosis befalls the heavenlies. Instead of a spectacle, there is a strife; instead of an exhibition, a fight. The heavenlies now appear as a field of battle. The heavenlies are not now, any more than the heavenlies before the Fall, secure from the invasion of the spoiler and the foe. Our enemies are the world rulers of the dark and disordered system of things that now prevails among men. They follow us into our retreat. Resenting our escape from their dominion, bitterly grudging our being blessed by God and exalted in Christ, in the heavenlies, they would fain scale the mountain of our hope and joy in the Lord. Their temptations and assaults now are not carnal, but spiritual. Be not unduly afraid of them. Be not ignorant of their devices. Beware of meeting them in their own domain, in the world of whose darkness they are rulers.

R. S. Candlish, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 1.

Chap. i., ver. 3.

I. Men, in the midst of the many conflicting manifestations of God, are trying to find the supreme revelation which will harmonise all the crossing rays in its own serene and fadeless light. This supreme revelation we find in Christ. The God

whom Jesus obeyed, the Father whom Jesus loved, is the God and Father we to-day are striving to find that we may love Him too. Every Godlike man gives a new revelation of God to man. "The God of Abraham" was a new conception of God that made primitive religion richer and better. The personal appropriation of God, so common in Hebrew piety, does not make the world at large poorer, but richer, by enlarging human faith and by sanctifying human experience. Every flower that blows, every bird that sings in summer, may claim the sunshine as its own. The violet can say, "My sun," without trespassing on the rights of the daisy; the butterfly can say, "My sun," without taking anything away from the lark. Each leaf and plant, each fern and flower, is a fresh revelation of the same sun—a new incarnation of the one great mind in nature. So is every Godlike man showing a new phase of the Divine character.

II. The God of Jesus Christ can do no wrong. The eternity after time is done with will be as stainless as the eternity before time was. Time and sin are discords leading into deeper and sweeter symphonies. Christ saw hell and loved God; He knew that hell was not a land lying outside the boundaries of the kingdom of righteousness. Christ did not explain evil; He simply left it beneath His feet and went home. The explanation of sin comes only to those who have conquered sin.

H. Elvet Lewis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 390.

References: i. 3.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 130; J. Stalker, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 127.

Chap. i., vers. 3, 4.

I. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." These words recall the joy and triumph of the ancient Psalms. They read as if Paul was intending to write a song of happy thanksgiving. He attributes to Christ the whole development of his spiritual life. The larger knowledge of God and of the ways of God, which came to him from year to year, had come from Christ; and he felt sure that whatever fresh discoveries of God might come to him would come from Christ. Faith, hope, joy, peace, patience, courage, zeal, love for God, love for man—he had found them all in Christ. It was on the ground of his own personal experience that he was able to tell men that the riches of Christ are unsearchable.

II. I need hardly remind you that Calvinism has derived its strongest Scriptural support from the interpretation which has

been placed upon certain passages in the writings of the Apostle Paul. On the first few verses of this Epistle the Calvinistic theory of election and predestination has been supposed to rest as on foundations of eternal granite. It is true that the technical terms of the Calvinistic theology are to be found in the Epistles of Paul, but they do not stand for the Calvinistic ideas. When Paul speaks of God electing men, choosing them, foreordaining them, predestinating them, He means something very different from what Calvinism means when it uses the same words. Calvinism teaches that by the decree of God some men are foreordained to everlasting death; Paul teaches that "it is the will of God that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Calvinism teaches that "neither are any other redeemed by Christ but the elect only"; Paul teaches that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. According to the Calvinistic conception, some men who are still children of wrath, even as the rest, are among the elect, and will therefore some day become children of God. That is a mode of speech foreign to Paul's thought; according to Paul, no man is elect except he is in Christ. We are all among the non-elect until we are in Him. But once in Christ, we are caught in the current of the eternal purposes of the Divine love; we belong to the elect race: all things are ours; we are the children of God and heirs of His glory.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on Ephesians*, p. 25.

REFERENCES: i. 3, 4.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1738. i. 3-6.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 272. i. 4, 5.—*Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 202. i. 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 360; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 102; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 373.

Chap. i., vers. 5, 6.

REGENERATION and Sonship in Christ.

We have now to consider that original and central Divine purpose which explains and includes all that the infinite love of God has done for our race already, all that the infinite love of God will do for us through the endless ages beyond death. God "foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself."

I. "Through Jesus Christ." Our Lord is always represented as being, in the highest sense and in a unique sense, the Son of God. He is a Servant and something more. There is an ease, a freedom, a grace, about His doing of the will of God, which can belong only to a son. There is nothing constrained

in His moral and spiritual perfection; it is not the result of art and painstaking. He was born to it, as we say; He does the will of God as a child does the will of his father: naturally, as a matter of course, almost without thought. The character of His communion with His Father confirms this impression. There is no irreverent familiarity, but there is no trace of fear or even of wonder. It is plain that He lived in the very light of God, saw God as no saint had ever seen Him; but He was not subdued or overawed by the vision. Prophets had fallen to the ground when the Divine glory was revealed to them; but Christ stands calm and erect. A subject may lose self-possession in the presence of his prince, but not a son.

II. This adoption of which Paul speaks is something more than a mere legal and formal act, conveying certain high prerogatives. We are called the sons of God because we are really made His sons by a new and supernatural birth. In some the change is immediate, decisive, and apparently complete; in others it is extremely gradual, and may for a long time be hardly discernible. Look at these Ephesian Christians. The Apostle has to tell them that they must put away falsehood and speak the truth; that they must give up thieving, and foul talk, and covetousness, and gross sensual sin. He addresses them as saints. They were regenerate, but yet in some of them the moral effects of regeneration were very incomplete; the change which regeneration was ultimately certain to produce in their moral life had only begun, and it was checked and hindered by a thousand hostile influences.

III. What God has done for us is "to the praise of the glory of His grace"; and the Apostle adds, "which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." With the infinite suggestiveness of the last word Paul seems to have been content. Christ dwells for ever in the infinite love of God, and as we are in Christ, the love of God for Christ is in a wonderful manner ours.

R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 40.

Chap. i., vers. 5-10.

The Final Restoration of all Things.

There are several passages in the New Testament—and this is one of them—which make it clear that the Divine mercy is ultimately to achieve a complete triumph over misery and moral evil; and these passages, if they stand alone, might give us the impression that all who in any age, in any land, in any world,

have erred and strayed from God are to be brought back by the Good Shepherd to the flock and to the fold.

I. But this Epistle, like the other documents contained in the New Testament, was not written for persons who were uninstructed in the Christian faith. If anything is clear about the teaching of Christ and His Apostles it is that they warned men not to reject the Divine mercy and so become irrevocable exiles from God's presence and joy. They assumed that some would be guilty of this supreme crime and would be doomed to this supreme woe. Some men will inherit eternal life; some men will be punished with the second death. When therefore Paul spoke of God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the Ephesian Christians would not misunderstand his meaning. It would be understood that while those who had incurred irrevocable exclusion from the life of God were to receive the just punishment of their sin and to perish, the rest of the moral universe was to be organised into a perfect unity for eternal ages of righteousness and glory.

II. The universe was created to reach its perfection in Christ, and the eternal thought of God has been moving through countless ages of imperfection, development, pain, and conflict towards this great end. Crossed, resisted, defied, apparently thwarted, by moral evil, the Divine purpose has remained steadfast, has never been surrendered. Its energy has been wonderfully revealed in the incarnation and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its final triumph is secure. God will "sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth." In Him the discords of the universe will be resolved into an eternal harmony; its conflicts will end in golden ages of untroubled peace; it will find God, and in finding God will find eternal unity and blessedness. What we hope for in the endless future is a still more complete participation in whatever knowledge and love of God, whatever righteousness, whatever joy, may exist in any province of the created universe. Race is no longer to be isolated from race, or world from world. A power, a wisdom, a holiness, a rapture, of which a solitary soul, a solitary world, would be incapable, are to be ours through the gathering together in one of all things in Christ.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 90.

REFERENCES: i. 6.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 267; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 471; vol. xvi., No. 958; vol. xxix., No. 1731; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 95. i. 6, 7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 93.

Chap. i., ver. 7.—"In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace."

THE Forgiveness of Sins.

I. The Apostolic doctrine of the Atonement rests on Christ's own teaching. To understand this doctrine it is necessary to have a clear conception of what is meant by the forgiveness of sins. (1) It is not a change in our minds towards God, but a change in God's mind towards us. (2) It must not be confounded with peace of conscience. It is clearly one thing for God to be at peace with us and quite a different thing for us to be at peace with ourselves. (3) There is another possible error. We must not suppose that as soon as God forgives us we escape at once from the painful and just consequences of our sins The sins may be forgiven, and yet many of the penalties which they have brought upon us may remain.

II. What is it then for God to forgive sins? (1) When God forgives men, His resentment ceases. He actually remits our sin. Our responsibility for it ceases. The guilt of it is no longer ours. That He should be able to give us this release is infinitely more wonderful than that He should be able to kindle the fires of the sun and to control through age after age the courses of the stars. (2) He can forgive sin because He is God. Sin is a violation of the eternal law of righteousness, and that law is neither above God nor below God. The eternal law of righteousness is one with the eternal life and will of God. When His resentment against us ceases, the eternal law of righteousness ceases to be hostile to us. The shadow which our sins have projected across our life, and which lengthens with lengthening years, passes away. We look back upon the sins which God has forgiven, and we condemn them still, but the condemnation does not fall upon ourselves, for God, who is the living law of righteousness, condemns us no longer.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 52.

THE Riches of God's Grace.

It is quite clear from the whole teaching of the New Testament that faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—is the critical act which determines the eternal destiny of all to whom the everlasting God in Christ is made known. Penitence for sin may be most bitter, and yet sin may remain unforgiven. Prayer may be most passionate, and yet the soul may find no rest. The endeavour to break away from old courses of evil may be sincere and earnest, and yet be altogether unavailing.

Forgiveness is not granted to us, nor the gift of eternal life, until we trust in God to save us through Jesus Christ our Lord.

I. The riches of God's grace are illustrated by the nature and cause of those evils from which God is willing to redeem us. All the evils of our condition, from which God is eager to save us, are the result of our own fault. We have sinned, and the sin is regarded by God with deep and intense abhorrence. It is to the guilty, and not merely to the unfortunate, that God offers redemption. It is to the guiltiest as well as to those whose sins have been less flagrant, and thus He shows the riches of His grace.

II. Again, the riches of His grace are illustrated in what He has done to effect our redemption. "We have redemption through the blood of Christ." If Christ had descended and declared that God was ready to be at peace with us we should have had infinite reason to speak of the riches of God's grace; but He came unasked. The price of our redemption has already been paid. We have not to entreat God to redeem us; He has provided for our redemption, and thus He has illustrated the riches of His grace.

III. Again, the condition on which God offers salvation illustrates the riches of His grace. If I were to speak with strict accuracy, I might speak of the absence of all conditions, for it is a free gift, and the only condition is that we should receive it. As Peter rose at the touch of the angel and found that his fetters were gone, and that the prison doors were open, we have only to rise up free.

R. W. DALE, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 691.

THE Forgiveness of Sins and the Death of Christ.

The two truths which Paul affirms in the text are in a sense equally mysterious; but the first may be more accessible than the second. He says, first, that we have forgiveness of our trespasses in Christ, and, secondly, that we have the forgiveness of our trespasses in Christ through His blood.

I. We are assisted to approach the first truth by what he has said in the earlier verses of this chapter. The eternal springs of the Divine life of the human race are in Christ. Whatever strength, and wisdom, and blessedness, and glory are possible to us are possible through Him and through our union with Him. Christ's eternal righteousness, His eternal relationship to the Father, the Father's delight in Him, are the origin of all the greatness for which the human race was created. It

was from Christ, according to the Divine idea of the race, that we were to receive all things. Every spiritual blessing was conferred upon the race in Him.

II. But what special relation can be discovered between the death of Christ and the remission of sins? (1) In Christ we have found the ideal righteousness of the race. Shall we be surprised if we also find in Christ the ideal submission of the race to the justice of the Divine resentment against sin? His eternal righteousness made it possible for us to be righteous, for we were created to live in His life: His voluntary endurance of agony, spiritual desertion, and death made it possible for us to consent from our very heart to the justice of God's condemnation of our sin. In another sense than that in which the words are used by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "He was made perfect through suffering." (2) The death of Christ has another effect which constitutes it the reason and ground of our forgiveness. His death is the death of sin in all who are one with Him. (3) The death of Christ was an act in which there was a revelation of the righteousness of God which must otherwise have been revealed in the infliction of the penalty of sin on the human race.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 68.

IN Paul's idea the redemption in Christ stands out as something altogether unique, enshrined in distinctive grandeur. The definite article is used—"in whom," he says, "we have *the* redemption"—the one great deliverance of sinful men. That redemption is procured for us through "His blood," and it consists in "the forgiveness of sins."

I. The New Testament nowhere represents God as a Father only. A Father of infinite love and tenderness He is; it is our Lord's supreme revelation of Him; but is He not Sovereign and Magistrate as well? If His words are words of infinite love, are they not also words of inflexible holiness? The word "redemption" is strictly a legal word. It refers to penalty, not to mere moral influence. It is an act of grace on the part of Him against whom we have sinned, but founded on principles of righteousness.

II. It is clear that Christ did not suffer to appease any implacable feeling in God, to incline God to save. Every representation of Scripture is of God's yearning pity and love. Christ, a holy and loving Man, realised what the sin of His brother-man was—sin against the loving Father, sin that filled

the soul with evil; and the realisation agonised Him, the pure, the holy, Man and Brother. Was not this bearing human sin? Feeling all this anguish for others' sin, the anguish that they should have felt, that was the natural consequence of sin. And was not this a sacrifice for sin, a homage to righteousness, a manifestation of the inviolability of holiness, of the inevitable misery of sin, the satisfaction of a great principle, "magnifying the law and making it honourable"? "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Have we not here the key to the holiness, the love, and the profound moral philosophy of Christ's propitiatory sacrifice?

H. ALLON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 104.

Chap. i., ver. 7 (with Col. i. 14).

WHAT we have in Christ Jesus is here indicated by two phrases or forms of expression, which explain and define one another. The redemption through His blood is the forgiveness of sins; the forgiveness of sins is the redemption through His blood.

I. This limits the meaning of the term "redemption." It is restricted by the qualifying clause, "through His blood," and it is restricted also by the explanatory addition, "the forgiveness of sins." The transaction is wholly and exclusively an act and exercise of the Divine sovereignty.

II. The forgiveness of sins is the redemption through Christ's blood. The statement or definition thus reversed is significant and important. It is not the simple utterance of a sentence, frankly forgiving. It is that, no doubt; but it is something more. There is the offended Father Himself providing that the irreversible sentence of law and justice lying upon His rebellious children shall have fitting and sufficient execution upon the head of His own well-beloved Son, who is willing to take their place; so that they may come forth free, no longer under condemnation, but righteous in His righteousness and sons in His sonship. This is the redemption through the blood of Christ. And this is what we have when we have the forgiveness of sins, this and nothing short of this. It is something more than impunity, something more than indulgence, something very different from either impunity or indulgence, and indeed the opposite of both.

III. We have this great benefit in Christ. The gift of God held out freely to the acceptance of all the guilty alike, the gift of God, His free gift, is Christ, and not Christ as the medium or channel through which the redemption or forgiveness

reaches us, but Christ having in Himself the redemption and the forgiveness.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 18.

REFERENCES: i. 7.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 334; *Ibid.*, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 295; vol. xxvi., No. 1555. i. 7-14.—*Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 337. i. 9, 10.—F. H. Williams, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 262; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 85, 225.

Chap. i., vers. 9-11.

CHRIST the Justification of a Suffering World.

Such words as these of St. Paul spring out of that first bewilderment of joy which belongs to the sense of discovery. Christ is still a newly discovered wonder, and the wonder of the newness still fascinates, still overwhelms. What, then, is the mystery of God's will in gathering together all in one in Christ? Why was the Incarnation the true and only secret, the fit and only instrument? What did it actually do? Why was it such an immense relief to St. Paul?

I. Let me take it very broadly. What is the primary plan of God as we see it in nature? For this is the plan that Christ came to fulfil. We gaze and wonder at the terrific process of creation; and if we ask in awe and amazement, What is the end of all this? What is the purpose to be achieved? we are told, "Man." Man is the final achievement in which all this preparation issues; man is worth all this infinite toil, this age-long effort, this endless struggle, this thousandfold death. He is the justification; it is all very good since it all rises up into his crowning endowment. We turn to look at man, then, man as this world's fulfilment. What has he done to be worth it all?

II. The one nation in all the world which discovered the permanent purpose of God in history; the one nation which succeeded in finding a path through its own disasters, so that its own ruin only threw into clearer light the principles of God's ordained fulfilment—this unique nation pronounced that the fulfilment, the justifying purpose, was to be found in holiness of spirit, the union of man with God, whose image he is. Accept this as man's end, and no destruction appals, no despair overwhelms, for this is the higher life, which is worth all the deaths that the lower can die; this is the new birth, which would make all the anguish of the travailing be remembered no more. But to know the secret was one thing; to achieve its fulfilment was another. The one possible end—

the achievement of holiness—was itself impossible to the only people who recognised it as their end.

III. The holiness of God incarnate in the flesh of this labouring humanity, the holy image of God's perfect righteousness taking upon Himself the whole agony of man, dying the death which justifies all death—but it turns death itself, by the honourable way of sacrifice, into the instrument of the higher inheritance, into the sacrament of righteousness, into the mystery of holiness, into the pledge of perfect peace—this, and this only, makes a consummation by which the effort of God's creation achieves an end; this and this only, is a secret and a victory worthy of the merciful God in whom we trust. I need not spend many words on the practical application of this. It is practical enough sometimes just to draw out and study God's truth; and if we meditate on it, it will enforce on us its own applications. Only let us seek to realise that we are saved only by being well-pleasing to God; and we are well-pleasing only if He can recognise in us the fruit and crown of all this long travailing, the satisfaction of all this immense effort of creation; it is the holiness of Christ.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND, *Logic and Life*, p. 81.

REFERENCES: i. 10.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. x., p. 121. i. 11.—R. Thomas, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii, p. 86; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 215; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 30. i. 11-14.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 456.

Chap. i., vers. 11-15.

THE Holy Spirit the Seal of God's Heritage and the Earnest of our Inheritance.

I. In the early Church the access of the Spirit of God to a man was commonly associated with the mysterious gift of tongues, with the power of prophecy, or with other manifestations of a miraculous kind. It seems to be a law of the Divine action that the beginning of a new movement in the religious history of mankind should be signalised by supernatural wonders which bear emphatic testimony to the new forces that are revealing themselves in the spiritual order and illustrate their nature. These wonders gradually cease, but the loftier powers of which they are only the visible symbols remain. The miraculous manifestations of the Divine Spirit have passed away, but it was the promise of Christ that the Spirit should remain with us for ever.

II. That for the most part we are so indifferent to the presence

of the Spirit of God is infinitely surprising. We repeat in another form the sin of insensibility of which the Jewish people were guilty when our Lord was visibly among them. The past was sacred to them, but they were so completely under its control that they failed to recognise the nobler disclosures of the righteousness and power and love of God to themselves. And is it not the same with us? We look back upon the days when the Son of God was teaching in the Temple and in the cornfields and on the hills of Galilee; and we feel in our hearts that those were the days in which heaven and earth met, and in which God was near to man. The presence of the Spirit, which Christ Himself declared was to be something greater than His own presence, was to bring clearer light and firmer strength and completer access into the kingdom of God, does not fill us with wonder, with hope, with exulting thankfulness.

III. Paul has spoken of us in ver. 11 as being God's heritage; in ver. 14 we are described as anticipating an inheritance for ourselves. Our hopes are infinite. If by His Spirit God dwells in us now, we shall dwell in God for ever; and His Spirit dwells in us that He may redeem us completely from all sin and infirmity and raise us to the power and perfection and blessedness of the Divine kingdom.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 109.

REFERENCES: i. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 592; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 4; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 61.

Chap. i., vers. 13, 14.—"Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance."

I. THE character of the inheritance. The teaching of the passage is that heaven is likest the selectest moments of devotion that a Christian has on earth. If you want to know most really and most truly what that "rest which remaineth for the people of God" is, think of what the fruits of God's working in your hearts have already been, and expand and glorify these into "an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection." Heaven is the perfecting of the life of the Spirit begun here, and the loftiest attainments of that life here are but the beginnings and infantile movements of immature beings.

II. We gather from the passage some thoughts with regard to the true grounds of certainty that we shall ultimately possess the fulness of the inheritance. The true ground for certainty

lies in this: that you have the Spirit in your heart, operating its own likeness and moulding you, sealing you after its own stamp and image. This idea is a very grand and fruitful one. There are many grounds on which, as I think, this principle rests: that the present possession of this Holy Spirit is the true certainty of the full possession hereafter. (1) The very fact of such a relation between man and God is itself the great assurance of immortality and everlasting life. (2) The characteristics that are produced by this Holy Spirit's indwelling, both in their perfectness and their imperfection, are the great guarantee of the inheritance being ours. (3) The Holy Spirit in a man's heart makes him desire and believe in the inheritance.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, p. 42.

REFERENCES: i. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 358; vol. xxii., No. 1284; E. C. Hall, *Sermons*. 1st series, p. 238; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 315; *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 163; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 225; A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Union Chapel, Manchester*, p. 47. i. 14.—*Ibid.*, *A Year's Ministry*, p. 233; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 202. i. 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 275.

Chap. i., vers. 15-17.

THE Illumination of the Spirit.

I. The Apostle's prayer raises the whole group of questions which are connected with the two great words "inspiration" and "revelation." These words represent two very different things. Revelations may come to men who are not inspired; and men may be inspired who are not entrusted with any new revelations of the Divine thought and will. The whole life of Christ was a revelation. His miracles were revelations of the power and pity of God. But all the men that saw Christ's miracles were not inspired, nor all the men who were touched by His goodness, or who trembled while listening to His menaces.

II. To the Apostles inspiration was given in a very remarkable measure. They were appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ to lay the foundations of the Christian Church; they had authority to teach all nations in His name; later ages were to learn His mind from their lips. Theirs was a position of unique responsibility, and their qualifications were unique, for in the Divine order the measures of human duty and the measures of strength conferred for the discharge of it are always equal. But in kind the inspiration of the Apostles was the same as that which Paul prayed might be granted to the Christians at Ephesus, the same as that which we ourselves

may hope to receive from God. We should never be afraid to accept the infinite grace of God. In Luther's time men were afraid that the doctrine of justification by faith would corrupt the morals of the Church by relaxing the motives to righteousness. Luther preached the doctrine which many sagacious theologians regarded with dismay, and it ennobled and invigorated the morals of half Europe. A similar courage in accepting and asserting the inspiration possible to all Christians would not lessen, but confirm, the authority of prophets and psalmists, Evangelists and Apostles. When the spirit of wisdom and revelation is granted to us, the eyes of our heart, to use Paul's phrase in the next verse, are enlightened, our own eyes, and we see the glory of God. Apart from this illumination no true knowledge of God is possible to man.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on Ephesians*, p. 128.

REFERENCES: i. 15-22.—H. P. Hughes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 248. i. 17.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 331. i. 17, 18.—A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 58.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—"That ye may know what is the hope of His calling."

GOD'S Hope in His Children.

The Apostle speaks of the hope of God in His children as of the hope of a Father; and what such a hope may include let us now proceed to inquire.

I. Foremost of all is the hope that the children will walk in fellowship with Himself, reciprocating His love, receiving and retaining His teaching, and drinking in His spirit. He hopes that we will never leave Him again, that we will always wait upon Him, that we will always respond to His will, and that we will always be aiming to be perfect as He is perfect.

II. Very closely connected with such feelings is the hope that the child will grow in every grace and in every power for good. He would not have us continue to be babes. He sets before us the example of the First-begotten, who grew in wisdom, and in stature, and in favour with God and man.

III. Once more, is it not a father's hope that his child may be in the family a brother to the rest, and in the world a man of usefulness? And so is the Divine hope in our calling. We are adopted as sons, that together we may form one large, loving, and united family, to bear each other's burdens and help each other to conquer the world and win eternal life.

IV. God's hope in calling us to be sons is that we should be witnesses for the truth, teachers of others, soldiers of Jesus

Christ, followers of the Lamb through evil report and good report.

V. God hopes to have His children in His house with Him for ever. Two thoughts arise here: (1) the better we know God as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of glory, the better shall we understand His hope in making us sons and heirs; and (2) we shall always try to fulfil the hope He has in us.

J. P. GLEDSTONE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 138.

God's Inheritance in the Saints.

I. God's inheritance in the saints is possession of the highest kind. Beings are better than things.

II. God's inheritance in the saints is His own original possession.

III. God has a second or double title to the possession of His inheritance. He has purchased it.

IV. Considered from the human and earthly side, the possession is very poor. God estimates His inheritance by His own standard. If God has a rich and glorious inheritance in the saints, then (1) He will claim it; (2) He will take care of it; (3) He will make use of it; (4) He must take pleasure in it; (5) He will not forsake it.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 109.

Chap. i., vers. 18, 19.

SPIRITUAL Enlightenment.

I. "What is the hope of His calling." This phrase should surely be taken in its simplest sense: "That ye may know the hopefulness of God's calling; what hope there is in it; how full of hope it is." (1) Consider who it is that calls. It is God, and God in the character of the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, the God who gives grace and glory. (2) Consider who are called. All men such as they are. (3) The calling of God is hopeful (*a*) because it is on the one hand absolutely free, and on the other hand peremptorily sovereign and commanding; (*b*) because it is on the one hand earnest in the way of persuasion, and on the other hand effectual, as implying a Divine work of renewal in the will within; (*c*) because it is on the one hand righteous, and on the other holy; (*d*) because it is sure on His part and capable of being made sure on our part.

II. "What the riches of His glory and His inheritance in

the saints:" its rich glory; its glorious richness. This expression "His inheritance in the saints" is remarkable. It is not the inheritance which they receive from Him; it is not the inheritance which they have in Him; it is the inheritance which He has in them.

III. "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." That is the third thing to be known. (1) The knowledge which Paul prays for is altogether Divine, coming from a Divine source, through a Divine agency, for a Divine end. (2) The highest point in this threefold knowledge of God is the centre, and that implies your being His saints, His holy ones. (3) The exceeding greatness of God's power is put forth in our exercising faith: it is to usward who believe. (4) The hopeful calling of God is to sinners without reserve.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians.*

REFERENCE: i. 18-20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1466.

Chap. i., ver. 18; ii., ver. 7.

CHRIST'S Resurrection and Glory in Relation to the Hope of the Church.

I. The descent of the Son of God from His eternal majesty to the infirmities and sorrows and temptations of this mortal condition is so transcendent a revelation both of the love of God and the possible greatness and blessedness of man that we need not be surprised that to many profound Christian thinkers the Incarnation has seemed to constitute the whole of the Christian Gospel, but even the Atonement did not end the succession of wonders which began with the Incarnation. The Incarnation was wonderful; that it should have been possible for the Eternal Word, who was in the beginning with God, to descend from the eternal splendours of Divine supremacy and to become man, is an infinite mystery. But that, having become man and retaining His humanity, it should have been possible for Him to reascend to those heights of authority and glory, is also an infinite mystery. This is the explanation of the emphasis and energy with which Paul dwells on the greatness of the Divine power as illustrated in the resurrection, ascension, and glorification of Christ. During His earthly life He was unequal to the great tasks of supreme authority, just as He was unequal during His childhood to the tasks of His public ministry. In His resurrection and ascension into heaven there came an extension, an expansion, an exaltation, of the powers of Christ's human nature, which corresponded with His trans-

ition from humiliation to the glory of the Father. "The working of the strength of" (God's) "might" rendered Him capable of a knowledge so immense, enriched Him with a wisdom so Divine, inspired Him with a force so wonderful, that Christ, the very Christ that was born at Bethlehem and was crucified on Calvary, became the real and effective Ruler of heaven and earth.

II. God will confer on us a greatness and a blessedness corresponding to the greatness and blessedness which He has conferred on Christ. No promises of glory, honour, and immortality can adequately represent the wonderful future of those who are to dwell for ever with God; but in the ascent of Christ from His earthly humiliation to supreme sovereignty, in the corresponding development of the intellectual and moral energies of His human nature, we see how immense is the augmentation of power and of joy to which we are destined.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 144.

REFERENCE: i. 19, 20.—Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 254.

Chap. i., vers. 19-23.

I. THE Apostle desires that the Ephesian Christians may know what is "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe." I can easily imagine that a person who has been wont to speak of the privileges of believers till he has brought himself to think of them as separated by their belief from the rest of human beings—I can easily imagine that such a person will exclaim triumphantly, "See, then, the clause determines the meaning of all that follows. Whatever glory the Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God, may unfold, these are the persons to whom He will unfold it." Even so. I rejoice to think it. And therefore let us consider who these persons were. They were a very small society, aliens from the synagogue, aliens from the Gentile temple, regarded with scorn by those whom they met in the market-place. They were obliged to live much within their own circle. It is to these persons that St. Paul speaks of a fellowship that was quite illimitable. The reward of their faith was that they could not separate themselves from any creature bearing the form of a man. To do so was not to believe in Christ. To believe in Him was to acknowledge One who represented mankind at the right hand of the Father.

II. Such a faith as this, carrying them so far above all appearances, contradicting the conclusions of their natural understandings, overcoming the temptations that most beset

them, could not be attributed to anything less than a Divine operation on their spirits. The power which raises any man into the largeness and freedom of fellowship with God and with the universe is the power which exalted Christ to the right hand of the majesty on high.

III. The Resurrection and Ascension are held forth to us as the object of faith. He who wore a crown of thorns was proved to be the Prince of all the kings of the earth. He who had gone down into hell had triumphed over the principalities of hell, making a show of them openly. This St. Paul held to be the true faith of a Christian; hereby it was marked out as different from the faiths that had gone before it or that still struggled with it in the world.

IV. St. Paul, who had thrice suffered stripes; St. Paul, who had hardly escaped from the mob at Ephesus; St. Paul, who was in Nero's hands at Rome—St. Paul dares to tell these disciples of his that the powers of the world are put under Christ. The confidence with which the Apostles believed that the kingdoms of the world had in very deed been proved to be the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ explains the longing with which they looked forward to the final unveiling of Christ, their zeal to keep the longing alive in their disciples. They could not define the limits of His conquests, who had ascended on high that He might fill everything.

V. But what is the witness of our constitution in Christ? What is it that lives to prophesy of this ultimate victory? "He has given Him to be Head over all things to His Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." All the blessings which individual men have ever received from the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be traced directly to the belief, which our Communion Service expresses, that we dwell in Christ, and that Christ dwells in us; that we are very members incorporate in the body of Him that filleth all in all. Take away that faith, and you do not take away some grand mystical conception of Christianity: you take away all that has made it practical, all that has made it dear to the hearts of sinners and sufferers, all that binds together men of different races, classes, countries, ages.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 85.

REFERENCES: i. 19-23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ix., No. 534. i. 20, 21.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol iv., p. 97. i. 22.—W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 237; S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 237; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 89. i. 22, 23.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 32; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*.

15th series, p. 229. i. 23.—J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 317; L. Davies, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 353; *Congregationalist*, 1872, p. 454. ii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 127; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 65. ii. 1-3.—R. Elder, *Family Treasury*, Jan., 1878. ii. 2—E. Paxton Hood, *Preacher's Lantern*, vol. ii., p. 435. ii. 3.—J. B. Heard, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 120; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 20. ii. 3-5.—F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race*, p. 163. ii. 4.—J. B. Brown, *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 392. ii. 4, 5.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 808.

Chap. ii., vers. 4-7.

I. Note the three privileges which are here supposed to belong to believers. (1) They are quickened. There can be no doubt that this privilege, in some intelligible sense at least, is enjoyed by God's people on earth, or, in other words, that there is a change wrought upon them which is equivalent to their being made alive from having been previously dead. The three graces of faith, hope, and love, all of them the fruits of the Spirit, are the present evidences that believers are here in this world quickened together with Christ. They are evidences that life now reigns where death reigned before. (2) Believers are raised up. The expression is to be understood figuratively, as indicating that there is a spiritual change wrought upon believers, which bears some analogy to the literal resurrection of Christ. The being raised up together with Christ we consider as the development of the spiritual life in all the feelings and in the whole character and conduct of His people, in the varied relations in which they stand to Him, and to the Church, and to each other, and to the world. There is a spiritual quickening, and there is a spiritual resurrection. (3) The text forms a climax, each particular leading to something higher. Christ's people, like all others of the human race, in their natural state dead in sin, are first quickened by the Spirit, next they are raised up with Christ, and then they are permitted to sit in heavenly places with Him. The last privilege, like the others, they enjoy even now.

II. Note one or two illustrations from this truth. (1) God has provided a refuge for His people. He gives them peace. (2) In secret prayer the believer may realise the presence of God (3) There are other heavenly places where Christ is to be met with, as, for example, where His people are engaged in solemn meditation on His truth. (4) There is another heavenly place where Christ's people are permitted to enjoy His society

even on earth, viz., the spot where, after a strong conflict with temptation, grace has secured the victory for the believer. When he can say to the wicked one, "No; I will not commit this wickedness and sin against God," you see a man in a heavenly place with Jesus Christ.

A. D. DAVIDSON, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 328.

REFERENCES: ii. 4-7.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 52; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 106. ii. 4-8.—*Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 100. ii. 5.—C. Kingsley, *Sermons for the Times*, p. 74; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 87.

Chap. ii., ver. 6.—"Hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

THE Church a Home for the Lonely.

The subject suggested by the text is the need which mankind lies under of some shelter, refuge, rest, home, or sanctuary from the outward world, and the shelter or secret place which God has provided for them in Christ.

I. By the world I mean all that meets a man in intercourse with his fellow-men, whether in public or in private, all that is new, strange, and without natural connection with him. Christ finds us weary of the world, in which we are obliged to live and act, whether as willing or unwilling slaves in it. He finds us needing and seeking a home and making one, as we best may, by means of the creature, since it is all we can do. The world in which our duties lie is as waste as the wilderness, as useless and turbulent as the ocean, as inconstant as the wind and weather. It has no substance in it, but is like a shade or phantom; when you pursue it, when you try to grasp it, it escapes from you, or it is malicious, and does you a mischief. We need something which the world cannot give; this is what we need, and this it is which the Gospel has supplied.

II. I say that our Lord Jesus Christ, after dying for our sins on the cross and ascending on high, left not the world as He found it, but left a blessing behind Him. He left in the world what before was not in it: a secret home, for faith and love to enjoy, wherever they are found, in spite of the world around us. This is the Church of God, which is our true home, of God's providing, His own heavenly court, where He dwells with saints and angels, into which He introduces us by a new birth, and in which we forget the outward world and its many troubles. The world is no helpmeet for man, and a helpmeet he needs. What is our resource? It is not in arm of man, in flesh and

blood, in voice of friend, or in pleasant countenance; it is that holy home which God has given us in His Church; it is that everlasting city in which He has fixed His abode; it is that mount invisible whence angels are looking at us with their piercing eyes, and the voices of the dead call us; Greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 185.

REFERENCES: ii. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxviii., No. 1665; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 140; J. Baldwin Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 373.

Chap. ii., ver. 8.—"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

SALVATION by Grace.

I. To Paul the doctrine of justification by faith was not a final statement of Christian truth. It was not a formula which could be used mechanically for constructing schemes of Christian doctrine, and which made it unnecessary for him to recur to the actual relations between God and the human race. Any account of the relations between God and ourselves which does not include this conception is not only defective, but fatally defective, is absolutely and ruinously erroneous; but this conception does not exhaust the Divine relations to the human race. There are other relations between God and man which cannot be expressed in terms of law, and it is with these relations that Paul is dealing in this Epistle. The fact which his account of justification by faith represented in one form is represented here in another. His mind and heart are filled with the Divine grace.

II. To some of us that beautiful word has been soiled by unclean hands, tainted by contact with corrupt and pernicious forms of religious thought. But the word is too precious to be surrendered. Among the Greeks it stood for all that is most winning in personal loveliness, for the nameless fascination of a beauty which is not cold and remote, but irresistibly attractive and charming. (1) Grace transcends love. Love may be nothing more than the fulfilment of the law, but grace is love which passes beyond all claims to love. (2) Grace transcends mercy. Mercy forgives sin, and rescues the sinner from eternal darkness and death; but grace floods with affection the sinner who has deserved anger and resentment. If human salvation has its origin in the infinite grace of God, if by that grace it is

carried through to its eternal consummation, then our true position is one of immeasurable trust and hope. We have only to receive the infinite blessings of the Divine love; we have to surrender ourselves to that stream of eternal benediction which has its fountains in the eternal depths of the Divine nature; we have to make way for the free unfolding in our life and destiny of the Divine idea and purpose.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 170.

REFERENCES: ii. 8.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xviii., No. 1064; vol. xxvii., No. 1609; W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 203; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 411; T. R. Stevenson, *Ibid.*, vol. xxv., p. 371; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 94; T. T. Lynch, *Three Months' Ministry*, p. 49. ii. 8, 9—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 160; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 165; J. Smith, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 389. ii. 8-10.—W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 109.

Chap. ii., ver. 10.—"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

CHRISTIAN Men God's Workmanship

I. The special infirmities of men vary. The fault of our nature assumes a thousand forms, but no one is free from it. I look back to the ancient moralists, to Plato, and to Seneca, and to Marcus Antoninus, and I find that they are my brethren in calamity. The circumstances of man have changed, but man remains the same. How are we to escape from the general, the universal, doom? We want to remain ourselves and yet to live a life which seems impossible unless we can cease to be ourselves. It is a dreadful paradox, but some of us know that this is the exact expression of a dumb discontent which lies at the very heart of our moral being. Is there any solution? Paul tells us what the solution is: Christian men are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus."

II. "We are God's workmanship." The branch is in the vine, though as yet the leaf has hardly escaped from its sheath, and the flower is only timidly opening itself to the sun and air. The Divine idea is moving towards its crowning perfection. Never let us forget that the life which has come to us is an immortal life. At best we are but seedlings on this side of death. We are not yet planted out under the open heavens and in the soil which is to be our eternal home. Here in this world the life we have received in our new creation has neither time nor space to reveal the infinite wealth of its resources; you

must wait for the world to come to see the noble trees of righteousness fling out their mighty branches to the sky and clothe themselves in the glorious beauty of their immortal foliage. And yet the history of Christendom contains the proof that even here a new and alien life has begun to show itself among mankind. A new type of character has been created. Christ lives on in those whose lives are rooted in Him.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 185.

THE Heavenly Workman.

"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." It is true that we do not improve ourselves; it is all of grace; yet good works are binding upon us all the more. On the other hand, let us not take credit to ourselves. We should never have come into the workshop but for the heavenly Artist.

I. A great difference in the material. It is useless to say that all men are equal. We are not all born alike. From the fault or misfortune of our progenitors, we may start in the race with heavy burdens that we cannot shake off. Besides, we differ in both physical and mental constitution. Let it be understood that the Great Workman does not expect the same results from every kind of material. There is one thing He expects from all and something He has a right to expect, and that is what all can do: we must love God. Let us be charitable with each other, for all the material in God's workshop comes there to be beautiful. This thought will help me to bear with my fellow-Christian, because I know that he will be improved before he leaves, and it will teach me to be modest, inasmuch as I should not be there if I were perfect. God is the almighty Artist. Other artists are limited, if in nothing else, certainly in time, but not so with Him who is at work upon us; and whatever God touches He ennobles.

II. It is well for us to have confidence in the Workman. God means to make us that which He can contemplate with delight, and we may be sure that every improvement in us brings Him enjoyment. "He taketh pleasure in the work of His hands." Confidence in the Workman will give us patience when He seems long.

III. We must not forget that the Workman has a plan. God knows all, and knows the precise bearing of each event on our lives. If we look back, we may often see that God has been working all along in harmony with one idea. (1) The variety of tools. What are the so-called means of grace but

tools in the hand of the Great Workman? What are preachers but God's chisels and hammers? Books, too, are tools. How much the Great Workman has accomplished by the press. The finest work is often done by those sharp-edged chisels called Pain and Bereavement. How many of us are to be made perfect by suffering. (2) Will the work ever be completed? Not in this world, certainly. One thing is apparent: we shall begin in heaven where we leave off in this world.

T. CHAMPNESS, *New Coins from Old Gold*, p. 79.

REFERENCES: ii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxxi., No. 1829; C. Marshall, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 65; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 6th series, p. 125; E. M. Goulburn, *Thoughts on Personal Religion*, p. 181.

Chap. ii., vers. 11-22.

JUDAISM and Christianity.

I. To Paul the moral confusion and the religious desolation of the Gentiles were appalling. He believed that they were enduring the just penalties of their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. The first chapter of Romans is a terrible commentary on what he meant by the Gentiles being without God in the world. Everything was changed by the coming and the death of Christ. By Him the whole world had been brought within the range of the grace and redemptive power of God. The external institutions of Judaism, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, had been the middle wall of partition between the elect nation and the rest of the world; these institutions had isolated the Jews from all pagan races, and had restrained within the limits of the elect race the great revelation of the righteousness and love of God; and the reason for the existence of these institutions ceased at the coming of Christ. He was the true Temple, the true Priest, the true Sacrifice; and He came to found a spiritual kingdom in which descent from Abraham was to confer no privileges. By bringing to an end the religious supremacy of the Jews, Christ brought to an end the estrangement, the enmity, between Jew and Gentile. He created in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace.

II. The restoration of the universe to an eternal unity in Christ has begun; the old division between the descendants of Abraham and the heathen world has disappeared; in their religious life, all Christians of all nations, whatever their temporary and external distinctions, are already one in Christ. "Each several building"—the Church at Ephesus, which was

largely composed of Gentiles, as well as the Church at Jerusalem, which was almost exclusively composed of Jews—each Christian community is included in the immense plan, has its relations adjusted to the rest of the great structure, and in Christ being "fitly framed together," groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord.

R. W. Dale, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 201.

Chap. ii., ver. 12.—"Without God in the world."

Practical Atheism.

The text may be applied to us—

I. When the belief in God and its object do not maintain habitually the ascendant influence over us, over the whole system of our thoughts, feelings, purposes, and actions. Let us examine ourselves whether we live under a prevailing, powerful, all-pervading sentiment of God, or whether the thought of Him be slight, remote, uninfluential, and very often absent altogether.

II. The text is applicable to those who have no solemn recognition of God's all-disposing government and providence, who have no thought of the course of things but just as going on, or think they see things managed so wrongly that there cannot be a constant interference of sovereign power and wisdom. If God be in the world and an all-presiding Providence, those who do not acknowledge it really and practically are without Him in the world.

III. The text is a description of these classes also: (1) all those who are forming or pursuing their scheme of life and happiness independently of God; (2) those who have but a slight sense of universal accountableness to God as the supreme authority, who have not a conscience constantly looking and listening to Him and testifying for Him: to be insensible to the Divine character as Lawgiver, rightful authority, and Judge is truly to be without God in the world; (3) that state of mind in which there is no communion with Him maintained or even sought with cordial aspiration; (4) the state of mind in which there is no habitual anticipation of the great event of going at length into the presence of God; (5) those who, while professing to retain God in their thoughts with religious regard, frame the religion in which they are to acknowledge Him according to their own speculation and fancy.

J. Foster, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 278.

References: ii. 12.—F. W. Aveling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 360; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 67; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 144.

Chap. ii., ver. 13.—"Ye who sometimes were far off."

Sin the Separator.

I. Sin has broken the beautiful chain of the material universe. When man fell, nature fell; and the links were severed by the Fall. And worse than this, man is divided from man, every one from his fellow. The very Church is broken up, Christian from Christian. The lust of pride, the lust of an opinionated mind, the lust of prejudice, the lust of jealousy, the lust of a worldly ambition—these are the fabricators of all discord. These make foes out of hearts which were meant to love as brethren.

II. Sin separates a man from himself. I question whether any man is at variance with his brother till he has first been at variance with himself. But sin takes away a man's consistency. A man is not one, but he is two; he is many characters. What he is one time, that is just what he is not another. Passions within him conflict with reason, passions with passions, feelings with feelings; he is far off from himself, and this the separation does.

III. If you wish to know how far sin has thrown man away from God, you must measure it by the master link which has spanned the gulf. The eternal counsel, the immensity of a Divine nature clothing Himself in manhood, is love to which all other love is but a drop in the fountain from whence it springs. A life spotless; a work so finished that it admits no adding touch; sufferings which make all other sufferings a feather's weight in the balance; a death which merges all other deaths into its one intensity; an eternity of priesthood; an eternity of the intercession of the Son of God—all this, and far more than this, has gone to make the return possible. That is the reason God so hates sin, because His dear Son had to travel all that way so painfully to bring us back.

J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 145.

References: ii. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 851; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 190. ii. 14, 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 266.

Chap. ii., ver. 15.—"For to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

St. Paul appears to regard the Jew as an incomplete or half-man till he found the Gentile, the Gentile as an incomplete or half-man till he found the Jew. He does not speak of opinions being adjusted or fitted into each other, of arrangements,

mutual surrenders, compromises. He speaks of the human being in each as being raised to a new level, as attaining the position for which he had always been intended, but which he had never reached, when they could coalesce and become one body. His language can imply nothing less than that the Gospel was declaring that true manhood or humanity which hitherto had presented itself in two apparently irreconcilable aspects. Let us ask ourselves what these aspects were, what was the characteristic of the Jewish mind as such and of the Gentile mind as such.

I. No novelties or refinements are necessary, or could help us much, to settle these characteristics. St. Paul's words to the Romans and the Athenians that the oracles of God were committed to the Jew, and that the Gentile was seeking God, if haply he might feel after Him and find Him, lead us to the very root of the matter, and explain the various phenomena which present themselves to us. Here is one picture: a Jew receiving from God His covenant, His law, His word, standing fast in the covenant, delighting in the law after the inner man, feeling His word as a fire within him, holding that to bear witness of His righteousness and truth was the great privilege and blessing of all, longing that He should reign over the earth, and that all which men had set up instead of Him should be put down. Here is another picture of one of the same race, perhaps of the same man in a degenerate stage of his existence. He looks upon God as shrivelled into his own oracles; they speak no more of Him; they speak only of those fortunate favourites whom He has chosen to receive gifts which are denied to mankind. The true Jew must have been longing for a fellowship with all God's creatures which he had not yet realised; it was the effect of all his Divine education to inspire him with this longing; and the false Jew, just because it had never been awakened in him, just because he cultivated all the habits and tempers of mind which were alien to it, was losing the perception of that which was peculiar to him, was ceasing to understand that any oracles of God had been committed to him.

II. In such a person as our Lord was, that one true man, in whom Jewish and Gentile elements might both be reconciled, might be found, and surely only in such a one. If there were no such being, no one of whom it could be said, "He is the manifestation of God; He is the living centre of all human beings and of all human thoughts," I do not see what explanation we have of the history of the old world or of its

passage into the modern. But without Him I can as little understand how there is to be peace in the jarring world to which we belong. He comes to arouse men and all the thoughts and energies of men out of sleep, not to put them into sleep. All that is strongest in man hears His voice and starts into life. Therefore the Jew becomes more intensely a Jew, and the Gentile more intensely a Gentile, before they consent both to receive their law from Him; and when they do receive it, though it crushes their pride, it justifies His Father's purpose in the destiny which He has fixed for them, in the education which He has given them.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 137.

REFERENCES: ii. 16.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 93. ii. 17.—E. H. Higgins, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 268.

Chap. ii., ver. 18.—**"For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;"** more literally **"For by Him we both have our introduction in one Spirit to the Father."**

IN this text we have a declaration of the Holy Trinity; there can be no doubt about that. Here are all Three Persons together: the Father, unto whom we have access or introduction; the Son, by or through whom we are introduced; the Holy Spirit, in whom, in whose communion, we enjoy that access. But what is remarkable about the text is not the mere declaration of the Three Persons which is often to be met with in St. Paul's epistles, but the practical nature of the declaration. We have here no mere assertion of a doctrine, but the declaration of a fact, and that fact not set down as a thing which must be believed, but made mention of as a thing to be recognised with thanksgiving and dwelt upon with joy.

I. "We both have access," says the Apostle, "unto the Father," and for this word "both" we may substitute "all," since the great distinction of that day between Jew and Gentile has been obliterated, and only those numerous minor distinctions remain which race and clime and colour make within the fold of Christ. We all have access unto the Father—this is *the* great and blessed fact, the practical sum of our religion; and this is the answer of the Gospel to all the seeking and questing of the natural man since the world began.

II. The Son, who is both God and man—He, the Daysman desired by Job; He who is equally at home both in earth and heaven, who *was* in heaven even while He walked on earth—*He* shall introduce us; by Him we shall have that long-sought-

for, long-despaired-of access to the Father of our souls. *He* shall take us (as He only can) by the hand, and lead us (as He only may) into that dread presence.

III. After that first difficulty—Who shall lead us to the Father? —there comes another question quite as hard to answer, and it is this: If we attain unto Him, how shall we bear ourselves in His presence? How shall we, defiled, stand in that holy place? If I have some one to show me the way to heaven, to introduce me there, yet how shall I be fit to appear, how prepared to dwell, in that all-holy presence? And the practical answer to such questing of the natural man is the revelation of the Spirit. In Him who ministers the gifts and graces and perpetuates the life of Jesus within the Church, in Him, the Lord and Giver of life, the Sanctifier, shall we have true access unto the Father.

R. WINTERBOTHAM, *Sermons and Expositions*, p. 331.

REFERENCES: ii. 18.—Phillips Brooks, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 318; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 291; W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., pp. 228, 250. ii. 18, 19.—E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 175. ii. 19—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 19; Maclure, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 289; *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 292. ii. 19, 20.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 32. ii. 19-22.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 217; *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 390. ii. 20.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 209; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1388; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 143. ii. 20, 21.—F. Haines, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 116; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 8th series, p. 125. ii. 20-22.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 439. ii. 21.—A. J. Griffith, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 197. ii. 22.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 267; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 218; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 255. ii. 22-24.—R. Tuck, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 125. iii. 1.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ix., p. 29.

Chap. iii., vers. 1-13.

THE Grace Given to Paul.

The enthusiasm with which the Apostle speaks of preaching the Gospel to the heathen is contagious. His words burn on the page, and our hearts take fire as we read them. What was the secret of this exultation in the Gospel and in his commission to make the Gospel known to all mankind? The question is a large one, but considerable light is thrown upon it by the contents of this Epistle.

I. Paul had a vivid intellectual interest in the Christian Gospel. To him it was a real revelation of the most wonderful

and surprising truths concerning God and the relations of God to the human race. It urged his intellectual powers to the most strenuous activity; it never lost its freshness; it was never exhausted. I believe that in all the great movements of religious reform that have permanently elevated the life of Christendom there has been a renewal of intellectual interest in the Christian revelation. And if at the present time the religious life of the Church is languid, and if in its enterprises there is little of audacity or vehemence, a partial explanation is to be found in the decline of intellectual interest in the contents of the Christian faith which has characterised the last hundred or hundred and fifty years of our history.

II. The heart and imagination of Paul were filled with the infinite and eternal blessings which were the inheritance of the human race in Christ. For human sin there was the Divine forgiveness; for human weakness in its baffled attempts to emancipate itself from the tyranny of evil passions and evil habits there was the Divine redemption. Paul believed in the unsearchable riches of Christ. We shall never recover his enthusiasm as long as we dwell chiefly on the external and incidental benefits which follow the acceptance of the Christian Gospel. R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 220.

REFERENCES: iii. 1-13.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 203. iii. 3, 4. —H. Wace, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 45. iii. 3-6.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 438.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—**"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."**

THE Unsearchable Riches of Christ.

I. Paul preached *riches*. This word represents three things: value, abundance, and supply.

II. Unsearchable riches—that is, value not traced by inquiry and investigation. You can very soon search earthly riches; but you cannot, by any use or enjoyment, search the unsearchable riches of Christ.

III. Christ bestows His riches freely; His joy is in communicating of His fulness. He has no wish to keep back anything from us that would do us good. We may stretch out both hands to heaven for all the help we need, and from the riches of Christ we shall have it.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 79.

REFERENCES: iii. 8.—A. Maclaren, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. v.,

p. 15; A. D. Davidson, *Lectures and Sermons*, p. 275; Smart, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 391; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 356; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 26; vol. ii., p. 247; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiii., No. 745; vol. xx., No. 1209; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, pp. 62, 237; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 33; W. Ince, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 61; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iii., p. 409; Graham, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 284; E. Aston, *Ibid.*, vol. xxii., p. 148; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 11. iii. 8-11.—D. Fraser, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 225; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 20. iii. 9.—Claughton, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 72; Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life: Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 354. iii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 448; vol. xvi., No. 933. iii. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 88. iii. 14.—A. Raleigh, *The Way to the City*, p. 46; J. C. Gallaway, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 88.

Chap. iii., vers. 14, 15.

ONE Family in Heaven and Earth.

Of God, the universal Father, the whole family in heaven and earth is named. He is Father to them all. They all feel the comfort of His love. And we may be sure that whatever needs to be done in those heavenly worlds in sustaining weakness, in guiding inexperience, in the leading of young spirits, or in the comforting of those that are discouraged by the mysteries of the universe—all will be done by the universal Father, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

I. These views ought somewhat to overcome the depressing effect naturally produced on us by the vastness and the grandeur of the material universe. Magnitudes and distances and millenniums are nothing to Him, and He would not have us sink under the weight of them.

II. This passage will do us good if it confirms our faith in the actual objective existence of heaven as a place, a chosen favoured place, where God and His children meet and dwell. Our friends have gone to the old ancestral home, which Christ has enlarged and beautified and fitted in every way for the reception of the redeemed from among men. They have gone from the mere colony, lying far out from the seat of government and the central city, into the better country and within the gates of the bright metropolis.

III. Heaven has great priority and pre-eminence over earth, and we may well yield up our best and dearest to swell its numbers and enhance its glories and felicities.

IV. If we thus regard heaven, we shall find it by so much easier to bear some of our heaviest sorrows and to understand

some of the deepest mysteries of life. Among the deepest is death, the premature death, as we say, of those who are just prepared to live, who are greatly gifted, greatly needed, greatly loved. When to live is Christ, then to die must be gain.

V. It surely ought with each one of us to be the great ambition of our life and the very chief of all our cares to belong heart and soul to this great family of God.

A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 46.

REFERENCES: iii. 14, 15.—Archbishop Magee, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 145; F. W. Robertson, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 181; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 121. iii. 14-16.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 313; W. Anderson, *Discourses*, p. 19. iii. 14-19. A. J. Parry, *Phases of Truth*, p. 249.

Chap. iii., vers. 14-21.

FILLED with all the Fulness of God.

I. Perhaps it would be well to leave this phrase in its vague sublimity without any attempt to explain it as it stands. It appeals to the imagination, touches lofty sentiment, and seems to suggest a grandeur belonging to worlds as yet unvisited by human thought. But though the phrase stands for an idea which passes beyond the limits of all definitions, the idea will be better apprehended if we attempt to get an exact conception of the phrase.

II. There are plants which we sometimes see in these Northern latitudes, but which are native to the more generous soil and the warmer skies of Southern lands. In their true home they grow to a greater height; their leaves are larger, their blossoms more luxuriant and of a colour more intense: the power of the life of the plant is more fully expressed. And as the visible plant is the more or less adequate translation into stem and leaf and flower of its invisible life, so the whole created universe is the more or less adequate translation of the invisible thought and power and goodness of God. He stands apart from it. His personal life is not involved in its immense processes of development, but the forces by which it moves through pain and conflict and tempest towards its consummate perfection are a revelation of His eternal power and Godhead. For the Divine idea to reach its complete expression and an expression adequate to the energy of the Divine life, we ourselves must reach a large and harmonious perfection. As yet we are like plants growing in an alien soil and under alien skies, and the measures of strength and grace which are

possible to us even in this mortal life are not attained. The Divine power which is working in us is obstructed. But a larger knowledge of the love of Christ will increase the fervour of every devout and generous affection; it will exalt every form of spiritual energy; it will deepen our spiritual joy; it will add strength to every element of righteousness, and will thus advance us towards that ideal perfection which will be the complete expression of the Divine power and grace, and which Paul describes as the fulness of God.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 242.

REFERENCES: iii. 14-21.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 356; *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 266; vol xxx, p. 225; A. D. Davidson, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 227.

Chap. iii., ver. 15.—"Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

THE ascension of our Lord is little thought of by many who seem to derive much comfort from dwelling on His death and His resurrection. The Ascension, they say, may be a fit subject for those who dream dreams and see visions to meditate upon. Often we long for a few hours of cloister life; then perhaps our spirits would sometimes find wings and mount up as eagles towards the sun. But we are in the midst of the bustle, and distraction, and ignominious occupations, of daily duties. We must perforce stay among these. Should we not reconcile ourselves to our lot? Should we not keep our souls low, not exercising ourselves in great matters which are too high for us? Is not this a part of the humility which is enjoined upon us, and which it is difficult enough to preserve, even with all our caution?

I. St. Paul never thought of the precepts which belong to the ordinary business of earth as standing aloof from the revelations of the Divine world or as merely added to them. He supposed that the Ephesians ought to know that they were sitting with Christ in heavenly places, in order that they might not lie or allow filthy communications to proceed out of their mouths. He did not suppose that it was unnecessary to tell those for whom he asked that they might know the unsearchable riches of Christ that they should not deceive, nor slander their neighbour, nor be thieves nor adulterers. If the saints in Ephesus considered it an insult to hear these plain broad exhortations they must go to some other teacher than St. Paul.

II. A faith which boasts that it rests upon the death and

resurrection of Christ, without taking any account of His ascension, may serve very well as long as our thoughts are occupied chiefly with the conditions of our own souls and with the question how they may be saved here and hereafter. But when we are brought to feel that we are bound up for good and for evil with our race, that we are not and cannot be exempt from any of its transgressions, that with it we must sink or swim, there comes a demand for something more than the gift of pardon, than the promise of a better world if we should be worthy of it. We can make out no special case for ourselves; there are no circumstances in our lives which entitle us to ask for exemptions and mitigations when our evil deeds are brought into judgment, far less which can make us dream of rewards. If man is doomed, you and I are doomed; if there is anywhere a salvation for man, that is for us. When we are brought to this pass, to this borderland between despair and a hope that is beyond all we can ask or think, the ascension day breaks in upon us with the light of seven suns. He has gone up on high; He is there, not separated from the creatures whose nature He bears, not separated from them in any sympathy, and that which constitutes His perfect humanity is our inheritance, this is the new and glorious clothing which He has provided for us if we will put it on, which we do put on when we remember that it is His for us.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 75.

REFERENCES: iii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1249; C. J. Vaughan, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 44; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 597; *Ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. vii., p. 84; G. Henderson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 309; J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 8; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 273; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 148.

Chap. iii., ver. 16.—"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."

THE Inner Man.

Every one has an inner man, a better self, a potential perfection within him, which will awake and begin to flower when he feels in his soul the touch of God. Through dress, through manners, through morals, through religious ceremony, we have to go to find the inner man, the very soul. How then is the discovery made? How does a man reach the centre and fountain of his own being, find himself, recover himself, bring himself home again to God? There are very great varieties of

experience, but perhaps these things or something like them will be found in all.

I. First, what may be called a soul consciousness, a consciousness of having or being a soul, not merely an animated something, to be covered with dress and beautified with manners, but a something spiritual, vast, deep, related to eternity, related to God.

II. The next thing is the conscious relation to God. No sooner does a man become conscious of his true self than he in that very act becomes cognisant and sensible of God.

III. The next thing, or the thing which goes along with this very often, is the consciousness of sin. If a man, looking and searching inwards, has found no sin to trouble him and humble him, he has not yet found himself.

IV. Then further he becomes conscious of goodness as well as of sin, not the old formal goodness, but goodness that is fresh, and new, and living, with love in the heart of it, gratitude lending it a glow and a lustre, faith building it up. First repentance; then cleansing and forgiveness; then gratitude; then filial love; then active goodness? Not so. The moment a man comes to himself, all these things begin together and go on together. A. RALEIGH, *The Way to the City*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: iii. 16.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 1; J. E. Gibberd, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 45. iii. 16, 17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 273.

Chap. iii., vers. 16-19.

SPIRITUAL Strength.

We may fasten upon five significant terms as keys by which we may unlock this Divine casket, so that its precious contents, the riches of the Father's glory, may be set free and shed abroad.

I. The first is faith. The seat of the strength imparted is the inner man; it is the strength not of outward propping, but of inward peace and power. The essence of it is Christ dwelling in your hearts, Christ living in you, Christ in you the hope of glory. And the means or instrument of receiving it is your simple heart's faith. Well may this strength be characterised as mighty, your being strengthened with might. It is, indeed, your being strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

II. To faith succeeds love. You are to be rooted and grounded in love. These images suggest the ideas of a grove and a building. You are to be rooted as the trees that constitute a grove

and grounded as the stones and pillars of a building, "rooted and built up." Love is the soil, rich, deep, and generous, and withal homogeneous all through, in which all the trees are rooted. It is also the soft and tender lime or mortar, the close-drawing and close-fixing cement, in which through successive layers the stones are deposited or embedded.

III. Faith and love lead on to comprehension, or taking in, a comprehensive survey of something very vast and vast in all directions. I am one of the family that fills the house to overflowing, one of the society for whose accommodation the house is almost too small. I comprehend its breadth, and length, and depth, and height, only to realise, in common with all the saints with whom I comprehend it, that in all directions it defies any bounds I might assign to it.

IV. Through this process we reach a marvellous knowledge, and at last—

V. "We are filled with all the fulness of God."

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 53.

REFERENCES: iii. 16-19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., p. 707; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 144.

Chap. iii., ver. 17.—**"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."**

I. IT is certain that something will dwell in our hearts. They are not intended to remain empty. If they are not filled with good, some evil spirit will enter in, and he, not Christ, will dwell there. If we are to realise what St. Paul means when he speaks of us as a habitation of God through the Spirit, we may do well to consider what some of those things are which do daily fill our thoughts, and almost literally people our hearts. We shall find that some of these inhabitants are in themselves innocent; that some are unmistakably corrupt; that all become usurpers when they cease to be subordinate to Him who alone has a right to supremacy.

II. We must learn to carry about with us a consciousness of Christ's real presence. We must regard ourselves as working and living for Him. We must look for His sympathy in anything that we have to do. Before doing any new thing we must ask whether He would have it done, and in what spirit He would have it done. Just as we see children or very young persons, if they are asked for an opinion, turn to their father or their mother to know first what they think, so no Christian is too old or too young to turn in thought to Christ to know how far He sanctions and what way of doing or thinking He dictates.

III. Christ dwells in others in spite of much that seems to be at variance with His presence. One great difficulty in the way of our being Christians is that no one appears to imagine that we wish to be Christians. Sympathy is one of Christ's truest messengers. They who refuse it tempt us to distrust Him and to deny Him. Christ dwells, or tries to dwell, in the hearts of all of us. If so, can we tempt one another to sin, and so to shut Him out? If so, can we speak contemptuously or think harshly of one another? Contempt for a soul in which Christ is not ashamed to dwell? Harsh thoughts of a spirit into which Christ is tenderly striving to force an entrance?

H. M. Butler, *Harrow Sermons*, p. 120.

References: iii. 17.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 15; J. Culross, *Contemporary Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 207; Hannah, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 313; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 340; Herbert, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 94; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 238; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 176; vol. ix., p. 314. iii. 17-19.—*Ibid.*, p. 315; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31. iii. 18.—A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, pp. 27-41.

Chap. iii., ver. 19.—**"And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge."**

The Cross the Measure of Love.

I. What is the language in which Christ reveals His love to us but His cross and Passion? The words, deeds, and sufferings of the Son of God are but one act; they make up one whole, one eternal word by which He speaks to us. This is that secret ineffable which has breadth, length, depth, and height. From the Annunciation to the Ascension is one continuous unfolding of His love: His humiliation as God and patience as man, His subjection to authority, His endurance of contradictions, His long suffering of sinners, the burden of the Cross and the sharpness of Calvary, the scorn and desolation, and after this the humiliation of death and the dishonour of the grave. He who bare all this being God, and we for whom He bare it sinners, this is the only tongue mighty to utter that which is beyond the speech of men and angels.

II. But further the language of His love is twofold: both without and within. He not only reveals it by His Passion to us, but also by His presence in us. And this is the Divine capacity by which alone we can understand it. He alone can bring us within His holy place, for there is no other sight which sees love but love; love alone can measure love, can perceive, can feel, it. He has been teaching us His love by making us

love Him. There is no other way. Till we love Him, all is dark. When we have turned or inclined towards Him, He has revealed Himself waiting to be gracious, overwhelming us with a consciousness of tender care and of love that nothing can estrange. He reveals this love (1) to those who have faithfully obeyed the grace of their regeneration; (2) to all who habitually and devoutly communicate in the sacrament of His Passion; (3) to all who are truly penitent.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 217.

Chap. iii., ver. 19.—"That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

THE deepest thoughts of the heart of a spiritual man are sure to come out in his prayer. Hear a man of God pray, and you hear the real man speaking. And when such an Apostle as Paul prays, we may well be all attention to catch every syllable. His prayer is an ascending one. Each petition rises higher than the preceding, and meditating on this prayer is something like ascending an Alpine peak. (1) You will see that, in order that a man may be filled with all the fulness of God, there must be an inward strengthening. There are spiritual faculties as well as mental, and it is absolutely necessary that these should be strengthened by the Holy Ghost if we are to apprehend anything of Christ in all His fulness. The Spirit of God takes us down, if I may so express it, to the shore of the ocean of redeeming love, and as the soul drinks it in new life and new power flow into every part of the spiritual system. (2) Then following that first petition comes "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith," that is, that, by an ever-acting faith on our part, a whole Christ may be received and a whole Christ may be retained within the soul. How many there are who only know what it is to have a Christ in the Bible. They know what it is to have a portrait of Christ; and they gaze with rapture upon it, and yet know very little of what the Apostle meant when he said, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts," that is, that He may be no mere portrait, no mere bright idea, but that enshrined within your soul there may be a living Lord. Then you see how naturally comes the following petition: "That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God."

I. Consider what it is to be filled with all the fulness of God. I take it that it is to have as much of God within us as our nature will contain, to be as full of God as the Temple of old was full of Jehovah's presence. The Apostle prays that the Ephesians may have God in the chambers of imagery, God in

their motives, God in their meditations, God in their contemplations, God filling up their entire manhood.

II. There is a vast difference between the incommunicable fulness of Christ and that fulness which He has on purpose to bestow it upon His people. There is a fulness of God which it were blasphemy for us to think of as our own or to ask for; whilst, on the other hand, there is a fulness in Christ that it is sinful on our part not to expect to receive. The measure of a man's power over others is in proportion to the measure with which he is filled with God.

A. G. BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 1096.

THESE words represent—

I. A large receptive capacity on the part of Christians.

II. God the standard, while the source and cause, of completeness.

III. A degree of approximation to that standard now attainable.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 304.

REFERENCES: iii. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 455; vol. xxix., No. 1755; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 88; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 137; E. Johnson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv, p. 305; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 356; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 346; vol. ix., p. 316; G. Matheson, *Moments on the Mount*, pp. 127-129; S. Leathes, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 337; A. Maclaren, *Christ in the Heart*, p. 53; A. Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 53. iii. 20.—Parker, *City Temple*, 1871, p. 105.

Chap. iii., vers. 20, 21.

I. THE central thought in this passage is the ability and willingness of God in Christ Jesus to do according to every possible measure of human need at every possible time. If we realised this, what a changed aspect it would give to this poor life of ours! How small and worthless would be the things that charm us most. How bravely and calmly we should bear the trials of our life. How well we should get rid of all this fear and doubt and gloom about to-morrow which darkens our to-day. How hard we should be able to work, with a pulse in every finger and a hope in every word, as we tell the young people for whom our heart's desire is that they shall be saved, "God is able."

II. In this remarkable verse we have a wonderful instance of Paul's cumulative way of speaking. The way in which Paul moves upward in his passion struck me once when I was in Wales. I was moving up a high and rocky slope. First of all

it led me through a meadow; after the meadow there was an upward pathway through a wood; up a little higher I caught a gleam of the river beyond; higher still I saw the scraggy rocks and tall hills behind; higher still I saw the golden cornfields at their feet; and still higher went I, until right away yonder on the horizon I saw the black-capped mountains higher than them all; and still I had to rise, and rising, at last I stood upon the summit, and said as I looked round, "This is perfection." But it was not, for on turning in one direction I perceived a sight I had not caught before. What do you think it was? It was a glimpse of the infinite sea stretching away beyond all ken, to meet the infinite sky. Paul gets up to that height, and then he wants a pair of wings to fly with. And then I come back again, and I say to myself, "This text is for me.'

J. JACKSON WRAY, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 297.

REFERENCES: iii. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxi., No. 1266; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1870, p. 619; J. Duncan, *The Pulpit and Communion Table*, p. 406; A. Maclaren, *The Secret of Power*, p. 130. iv. 1.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 146; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 145; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. x., p. 36. iv. 2.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 65.

Chap. iv., ver. 3.—"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

THE Unity of the Spirit.

I. What is to be kept: "the unity of the Spirit." That unity may be regarded as twofold. It may be viewed in two lights: as outwardly manifested and as inwardly wrought. In either view it is the unity of the Spirit.

II. This unity is to be kept. (1) There must be an endeavour to keep it. (2) There is a bond provided for keeping it: it is the bond of peace; it is the peace of reconciliation to God.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 70.

Chap. iv., ver. 3.—"The unity of the Spirit."

THE Basis of Communion.

I. It seems to me that there are two streams of influence which are pressing some, and those by no means the feeblest and least thoughtful, of our ministers, towards the conclusion that the Church of the future will take comparatively slight heed of doctrinal agreements and differences, and will base its fellowship on vital sympathy in the work of teaching, helping, and

saving society. First, there is the weariness of the narrow doctrinal basis which has been accepted as orthodox, which has made exclusion rather than inclusion the watchword of the kingdom of heaven. There is the certainty that many others within the Church who are distinguished by no loftiness of spiritual nature, but who are proud of their soundness in the faith, would be found practically, if they were examined, to be in much confusion as to the true nature and bearings of even such truths as the Incarnation and the Atonement; while outside the orthodox pale there are equally a large number who seem to be laden with all the fruits of the Spirit, to live in love, and to spend themselves in ministry to mankind. This is one stream of influence, and it is pressing men strongly in this direction, to this issue: a communion independent of doctrine and based purely on fellowship of spirit, sympathetic views of Christian activities, Christian endeavour and aspiration, Christian methods, aims, and ends.

II. There is another stream of influence tending towards the same result. There are those who are not impatient of the doctrinal barriers which are raised between those who, it is affirmed, ought to be in communion, but who are in doubt of the doctrines themselves. They hold reverently, tenaciously, to the spiritual element in Christianity. The Cross represents to them the highest and most sacred power which can be brought to bear on the development and elevation of mankind, but they have no hold on the realities outside the sphere of the human which revelation makes known to us. They see the historic basis of the Church, as they think, vanishing; they find no longer credible the facts and judgments on which for eighteen centuries Christendom has nourished its life. They dread lest those whose faith in the great Christian verities is shaken or shattered should drift away into blank atheism and sensualism, and they would gladly create for them a haven of Christian fellowship in a non-sectarian, undoctrinal, and free-thinking Church.

III. Sound doctrine is in the long run as needful to healthy, vigorous, productive Christian life as bone is to flesh in the order of the human frame; but I do not hesitate to say that I see considerable force in what is urged by this latter party, and I entertain not a shadow of doubt that in this direction—the larger and more loving recognition of the unity which may underlie wide doctrinal divergences—lies the next great expansion of the visible kingdom of heaven.

J. B. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 401.

I. The more the heavenly and spiritual union of all Christians in one body is out of sight and above understanding, the more necessary it is that we should be continually put in mind of it. Having once learned it, we should never allow ourselves to forget it, else we shall be often doing many things, in carelessness or in ignorance, most contrary to this Divine unity. Therefore the Apostle lays such stress on the word "endeavouring" in our text: "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," that is, making a serious object of it, looking to Church union and communion distinctly as one great purpose of our lives. Do Christians in general, do we ourselves, attend as we ought to this precept of the Holy Ghost? The bond of peace we understand and perceive the benefits of, but the unity of the Spirit is a matter of faith, not of sight; we either never think of it at all, or dismiss it at once out of our minds, saying it is above us, and all we can do is to live quietly among our neighbours of all sorts.

II. What can private Christians do towards so great an object as this of keeping the Church at unity in itself? In answer to this, I would remind you of those many Scriptures in which the Church of Christ is represented as a holy building or temple, whereof the materials are not earthly stones, but the sanctified and regenerated souls and bodies of Christians, living stones, as St. Peter entitled us all, forming one spiritual household. The layman or the child has so far the same duty as the Apostle, that is, to maintain his post in the building, and not to loosen it, as the withdrawing of any stone must do. We may never see what the early Christians saw on earth, the Church universal of one accord, of one mind, but we may hope to see in heaven that of which even the first and best Church was but a faint shadow and emblem: the unity of the Spirit kept perfectly in the bond of everlasting peace.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"
vol. i., p. 206.

Life and Peace.

I. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth." The influences which we recognise as coming to us from above, and which mould our individual being, are often presented to us partially in fitful succession, and their first effect seems rather to disturb us than to control. And yet it is out of such struggling and discordant elements that the growth towards the ideal life is to be won. For in all human life and movement that is not merely a sinking downwards there is something which without

irreverence may be called a breathing of the Spirit. And the Spirit must be there, striving with human infirmity, before the first upward step can be taken. It is not from the complacent, satisfied, unaspiring temper that the unity of the Spirit is to be wrought. There may be unity in such a life, but it is not the unity of the Spirit; there may be a sort of peace, but it is the peace of apathy. That is not the peace which reflects the image of the early Christian ideal

II. But when we look back on the struggle after it is over, and the peace is won, we may see the evidence of the working of something higher still, and a unifying, harmonising power that was less apparent to us at the time; and we cannot claim that power to have been our own. "When I said, My foot hath slipped, Thy mercy, O Lord, held me up." This is a strength which knows its dependence upon a higher strength, and which rejoices in the belief that it may be privileged to strengthen others with the might wherewith it has itself been strengthened from above.

III. For the Divinity that shapes our ends is no blind destiny descending on us from without and compelling us we know not whither, nor yet can we admit that character is fate in the sense that weakness predetermines men to ruin. There is a Spirit witnessing to our spirit that we are the children of God.

IV. And in this belief and consciousness the life is at last girded with the bond of peace. Life without peace is weakness and chaos; peace without life is nothingness. It is when the two are united, when self-control is not mere self-repression, but the enlightened guidance of an ardent will, that the individual has realised for himself, and will assist his brethren in realising individually, the ideal which the Apostle sets collectively before the early Church: the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

L. CAMPBELL, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 123.

REFERENCES: iv. 3.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 607; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 56; A. Mackennal, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 328; J. Baldwin Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 9; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 155; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 383. iv. 3-6.—*Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. ix., p. 186; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 205; vol. iv., p. 31.

Chap. iv., ver. 4.—"There is one body and one Spirit."

I. CONSIDER the unity or oneness of the Church as set forth by the unity or oneness of the body. "The body is one," says

the Apostle. Notwithstanding the several limbs of which it is composed, one life animates the whole. The parts mutually subserve one another. They instinctively feel that they belong to one another; that they owe to one another mutual help and support. And so, too, the Church is one—one mystical body, as we call it—having one Author, which is God, and one Head, which is Christ, and one informing Spirit, which is the Holy Ghost; having one country toward which all its members are travelling, which is heaven, one code of instructions to guide them thither, which is the word of God, one and the same band of enemies seeking to bar their passage, which are the world, the flesh, and the devil; having the same effectual assistances in the shape of sacraments and other means of grace to enable them to overcome these enemies, and of God's good favour to attain the land of their rest.

II. But, secondly, as in the human body there is unity, so there is also variety, diversity, multiplicity, or whatever else we may please to call it. The Church is most truly a body in this sense also: that its different members have different functions to perform, all these being assigned to them by God: and then, and then only, it makes equable and harmonious growth.

III. Consider the lessons which we may derive from these truths. (1) We are members of a body. Let us never forget this. It is only too easy to do so. Do not let us yield to the temptation which would lead us to separate ourselves, if not wholly, yet in part, from the body of Christ, and to set up a selfish independent life of our own. (2) If we are thus members one of another, many are the debts which as such we owe the one to the other. We owe each other truth, love, honour. Let us ask of God a tenderer, livelier, more earnest sense of the sorrows, needs, perplexities, distresses, fears, trials, of our brethren.

R. C. Trench, *Westminster and Other Sermons*, p. 152.

References: iv. 4.—J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 380; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 211.

Chap. iv., vers. 4-6.

Church Unity.

In these words, which unite the passionate enthusiasm of thanksgiving with the clear-cut precision of a creed, St. Paul draws out to us explicitly that which is the great subject of the whole Ephesian Epistle: the existence and the nature of the Holy Catholic Church of Christ. The whole area of humanity,

and therefore the whole area of the salvation of Christ, is seen by him as a whole. Over the whole battlefield of the world he watches the sweep of the tides of the spiritual battle. The unity of all men in Christ with God and with each other is the magnificent truth which fills his whole mind and heart, and breaks forth ever and anon in bursts of praise; and the text draws out at last, as it were in a triumphant creed, the great lines of the pervading subject.

I. The picture before St. Paul's eyes was the picture of the Catholic Church of Christ. And that picture differs very much from the appearance which it presents to our eyes now. Far less was it then in extent, numbering its thousands instead of its millions, only spread over the civilisation that fringed the basin of the Mediterranean, instead of pervading the length and breadth of the world. Far less pervading was it in its power. It had not yet penetrated into the very nature of humanity; it had not yet moulded the language, the thought, the imagination, and the life of all the leading nations of mankind. But yet, if it was far less grand in its outline, how much more perfect was it in its unity.

II. St. Paul places the source and living power of our unity not in anything that belongs to us, but in the eternal unity of God. There is one Spirit, the Holy Ghost Himself, making His temple in the hearts of Christians. They who partake of His life are one body still. The bonds which bind all Christian hearts with gold chains about the feet of God have passed upward from the earth. They cannot be trampled and broken under the heel of man; they cannot be severed. Whatever else we have done, the source of our unity we can no more close up than we can stop the outburst of some mighty river when it comes rushing down from its ice cave in the everlasting hills.

III. In all unity between rational beings there must be action on both sides, and God brings in the law in His dealing with us. All His blessings are freely given by His grace; but only by the consent of the human will can they penetrate the soul. Faith, hope, love, that triad of Christian graces—these are the conditions which make us one body indeed. What is the duty which this passage forces upon Christians? (1) Realise what you have. Feel, and act as if you felt, the large amount of unity which exists among Christians still. Let us act with, let us think with, let us pray with, all who bear the name of Christ. (2) Strive for what as yet you have not. There is an

incalculable waste of spiritual power, not only by division, but by friction and antagonism. There is a bewilderment of truth when it is proclaimed, however loudly, by discordant voices. If only Christendom were united, it would hardly need a generation to convert the world; if only England were united, our isle might be "an isle of saints," a kingdom of God.

BISHOP BARRY, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 679.

I. VER. 4: The Apostle uses a favourite image here. The Church is represented by the individual man, and the unity of the Church is represented as like the unity of a man. There is an outward oneness of character and walk, as there is an outward oneness in the corporeal structure of a man; and there is an inward oneness, as of the soul in man.

II. The one individual man, having a body and a soul, but still one, is one also as having and owning one Head. Made one body and one spirit, through the one hopeful calling common to all, we are further one as recognising one Lord. And there is but one method of union with Him and with one another in Him: faith, one faith; and one seal of that oneness of faith: one baptism.

III. Thus called, in one hopeful calling, to be one body animated by one Spirit, thus united to one and the same Lord by one and the same faith, confirmed by the seal of one and the same baptism, they who constitute the one Church come to stand in one and the same relation to the Supreme, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all. R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 70.

REFERENCE: iv. 4-6.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 428.

Chap. iv., ver. 5.—"One Lord."

I. How is the lordship of Jesus constituted? Not by the suffrages of men, but by the will of God. It consists in the exaltation, the reward of servantship, and is constituted by God directly and acquiesced in, and acknowledged, and accepted with gladness by the Church.

II. What does this lordship comprise? It is a sign of His pre-eminence. He rises far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this world and in that which is to come. In and over the Church, He, and He only, has the right to reign; and it is a high offence against Christ for any to set up thrones to men within the Church or to assume lordship over God's heritage.

III. See how this is essential to the Church. Of the Church's household Christ is Master. As a school of faith and holiness Christ is Teacher. Of the Church as a host Christ is Captain. Of the Church as bride Christ is Husband and Lord. Honour the Son, and you are in that very act honouring the Father also. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Every tongue that confesseth that Jesus is Lord does so to the glory of God the Father.

IV. Consider the Church in manifestation—that is to say, the Christian community upon the earth. Jesus Christ is Lord, Head, Ruler, Lawgiver, of the whole Christian assembly and of all the assemblies in detail—Jesus Christ, and He alone. As Lord He gives teachers; as chief Captain He employs officers and orderlies in the war. But He has carefully directed that they should remember that they are servants and not assume lordship over the heritage of God.

V. Note the uses of this doctrine. (1) The doctrine of the lordship of Jesus Christ stirs gratitude; (2) it requires obedience; (3) it promotes equity and fair play among Christians; (4) it binds together Christians in unity.

D. Fraser, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 145.

Reference: iv. 5.—C. C. Bartholomew, *Sermons chiefly Practical*, pp. 435, 450.

Chap. iv., vers. 5, 6.—**"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."**

I. The Apostle speaks first of one Lord. Those words would have at once recalled to a Jew the sentence which had been repeated to him since he could speak: "The Lord thy God is one Lord." And surely much of the emphasis of this Divine sentence lay in the word "thy." Multitudes of things surround thee and crave thy worship; there is One near thee, ruling thee, caring for thee, jealous of thee, who claims thy heart for Himself: He is the Lord.

II. "One faith." The Jew had been taught to put his whole trust in the Lord God of Israel. Faith or trust was the principle of his being; losing that, he lost everything. The different objects of sense were appealing to him every moment. He could care for them or dread them, but he could not trust them. He must have one faith, or they become his masters; he must have one faith, or there was nothing to bind him to his brother-Israelites; he must have one faith, or his manliness forsook him.

III. "One baptism." The baptism of John had been a

witness that the one God of their fathers was calling them to turn round to Him from all the visible objects and the secret lusts to which they had yielded; that He was pardoning away their sins and confirming His covenant with them.

IV. "One God and Father of all." One Lord the law and the prophets had spoken of. But this name of Father, who had uttered that? It came forth when Jesus went up into the mount to proclaim the fulfilment, not the destruction, of that which had been said in the old time. Then did the belief of "one God and Father of all" begin to break through the Jewish exclusiveness, to prove that the Jewish election had this for its final result. One God and Father of all, because one Man who can say, "I came from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father."

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 111.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 98. iv. 7-12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 982.

Chap. iv., vers. 7-16.

THE Church Edified and Edifying Itself.

I. There are various outward appliances all meant for the edifying of the body of Christ. These may be regarded as comprehending generally all the spiritual instrumentalities and gifts brought to bear upon the Church and its members from without and from above. For the Apostle is not here laying down the platform of Church government, or determining formally and authoritatively what offices had been or were to be owned and sanctioned in the Church. He is not thinking of that, but of something else. He merely names the ministries then in exercise. He names them simply to bring out their variety of function in connection with their unity of aim. They are all of them, as then subsisting, among the gifts which when He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, Christ received from the Father, that He might give them unto men. They are widely different from one another in respect of their inherent nature and their official use; but all their differences tend to one result: the drawing of the whole together, the edifying of the body of Christ.

II. In this process of edification the body of Christ is not passive. It has inward vitality, internal vital impulses and movements. And these also are various, yet tend in one direction and to one issue: the edifying of the body of Christ. Oneness and faith and knowledge as regards the Son of God

is the great *terminus ad quem*, the meeting point for all the members of the body. There is ripeness or maturity of manhood among Christians in proportion as there is oneness of faith and knowledge about the Son of God. To that we are all to come at last; to that we are all coming now. But our coming implies the fulfilling of two conditions. (1) There must be an end of all childishness or infantile imbecility; (2) there must be wrought in us an active energetic principle, bent on doing the true thing and doing it lovingly.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 94.

REFERENCES: iv. 8.—Archbishop Benson, *Sundays in Wellington College*, p. 243; S. A. Tipple, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 5; J. Kennedy, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 9.

Chap. iv., vers. 8, 11.

A GLORIOUS ASCENSION.

To ascend on high must have meant for Christ a large increase of His quickening influence, more power to act beneficially on human minds and hearts, to purify and energise, to inspire and elevate, as hitherto He had not been able. That was His supreme ambition, the height for which He sighed; and was it not even thus that He went up gloriously at last from the cross and the grave, mounting from thence to be a greater saving and subliming force than He had ever been before, to beget repentance and remission of sins beyond what He had ever done?

I. He led captivity captive; in plain language, He captured the prisoners, making happy captives of those who were the victims of a miserable captivity, emancipating them from the bondage in which they were held by bringing them into subjection to something better and worthier. They were captured by the vision of a spiritual redemption—a spiritual redemption, not for Jews only, but for peoples of all nations, for men everywhere. In leaving them alone to mourn and wonder, Christ drew forth from them the ripe fruit of what they had blindly and little by little imbibed from Him. Then at length He rescued them from prison to be the bondsmen of a grander Lord; then at length He raised their ideal.

II. "He gave gifts unto men." The men who had been redeemed from their former sensuous dreams to discern and follow the glory of the spiritual began to blossom all over, became thereby more Divinely endowed. Christ enriched them with a heritage of gifts simply by detaching them from the

meaner object on which their eyes were fixed and binding them fast to a higher ideal. Gifts that are not ours do often lie hid and slumbering in us, waiting only for the application of the needed stimulus—healing or cleansing—to display themselves; and blessed is he who with some disturbing, quickening touch helps to elicit them.

III. Christ left behind Him men qualified and ready to labour in different capacities. Here was the issue and fruit of Him, a number of living souls, whom He had been slowly training, on whom at last He had succeeded in impressing Himself, a number of living souls, at last in fellowship with His mind, understanding and sympathising with His aims, touched by His Spirit. Let us not doubt that that is always the Divinest work: to get at a man and be the means of ministering in some way to his healthier growth or finer inspiration, of helping him in some way to juster thought or loftier feeling.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Sunday Mornings at Upper Norwood*, p. 1.

Chap. iv., vers. 8-16.

THE Origin of the Christian Clergy.

No doubt from the first the Christian society which we now call a Church existed in Christ's faithful followers, even from the beginning, and wheresoever, in any time or country, two or three were gathered together by the communion of love or faith, they also would be a Christian Church, and even for years after our Lord's departure such a society existed without the separate order of clergy.

I. Yet there was a sense in which the Christian ministry was the gift of our Divine Master. Not in His earthly life, not as a part of the original manifestation of Christianity, but as a result of the complex influences which were showered down to the earth after its Founder had left, as part of the vast machinery of Christian civilisation, created by the Spirit of Christ for filling up the void of His absence, came the various gifts of Christianity, and among these was the great vocation, the sacred profession, of the Christian ministry. And various grades of the Christian clergy had sprung up in Christian society in the same way, by the same Divine cause, the same natural necessity as the various grades of government and law and science—a necessity only more urgent and more universal, and therefore more Divine, so far as the religious wants of mankind were of a more general, a more simple, and therefore a more Divine kind than their social and intellectual wants.

II. The two great functions of the Christian ministry are those of pastor and teacher. The object of their existence was, as the Apostle told them, that they might take their part in the complex but glorious work in which all Christians were called to share: the edifying or building up of the whole body of Christ. The Church, as thus put before them, was not to be an unreasoning infant, or a stunted dwarf, or an old crone, tossed to and fro with every blast, but it was to be a solid, well-built, manly, full-grown man. It was not to be a dead, dry system, but a well-compacted living organisation, in which every part should be knit together, every muscle should move in accordance with its natural bent, where there should be the active hand, and the feeling heart, and the ready foot, and the resolute backbone.

A. P. STANLEY, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 17.

REFERENCES: iv. 9.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 365; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 221.

Chap. iv., vers. 9, 10.

CONSIDER—

I. The ascension of Christ in the light of its previous and preparatory history. That the Son of man ascended from the deepest depth of human history and experience, from the lower parts of the earth, up above all heavens, presupposes His descent. In His descent He became the hidden presence and controlling power of the world's history until the old world passed away in His death and the new world rose in His resurrection.

II. The Ascension in the light of its declared purpose: "That He might fill all things." (1) When we see the only-begotten Son, clothed in a body like our own, exalted above all the heavens, in that sight we have before us the all-glorious and controlling centre of all the spheres, the key which interprets the testimony of prophecy, the gathered firstfruits of a new and redeemed world. The Gospel contains a gospel for nature as well as for man, the prediction of the day when the strife of elements shall cease, and when the powers of darkness shall be swallowed up of light. (2) By Christ's ascension our nature is endowed with an exalted fulness and clothed with a glory becoming the Son of God. "A parcel of clay," to use the words of Archbishop Leighton, "is made so bright and set so high as to outshine all the flaming spirits of eternity and the stars of the morning." And with such a miracle of grace who

can regret his connection with a sinful history which conditions so great a salvation?

W. PULSFORD, *Trinity Church Sermons*, p. 271.

REFERENCE: iv. 9, 10.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 388.

Chap. iv., ver. 10.—"He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things."

CHRIST Filling all Things.

I. Let us understand, first, how Christ fills all things, not with His body, for, as it has been well said, "Christ's body may be anywhere at any time; but Christ's Spirit is everywhere at all times." Of that body of Christ, of spiritual body at all, still more of spiritual body glorified, we know, and we can know, nothing; but as far as our faculties can reach, body must occupy definite space. How then does Christ fill all things? (1) By His influence. We know that even here a person may occupy a much larger sphere than he actually fills with his presence, and the range in which a man may thus go on filling circle after circle is almost without limit. Carry on that idea of the power of extending influence infinitely, and you will arrive at some conception of the way in which Christ can fill all things. (2) By His sovereignty and care. The Queen fills her realms, and we are always conscious of the power of our Queen. How much more does the royal, superintending power and love of Christ fill the universe? There is nothing so small that it is below it, and there is nothing so great that it is above it, nothing independent of it, nothing despised by it. (3) Higher still than this all-diffusive power of Christ's majesty, there is that actual living Spirit that we call the Holy Ghost. By the presence of the Holy Ghost Christ is present everywhere, and not only present, but He is the very life of all that lives; He is the soul of every being in creation. "He fills all things."

II. Why does Christ fill all things? And what is the design of this grand arrangement in God's great empire? (1) It is that all honours should be to Jesus Christ in every degree; (2) that no man upon this earth should ever find any real satisfaction out of Christ; (3) that there may be always in Christ a fulness suited to every man's want.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 174.

REFERENCES: iv. 10.—*Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. i., p. 272; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 305. iv. 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii.,

p. 215; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 204; Fletcher, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 32. iv. 11, 12.—S. Pearson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 35; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 224.

Chap. iv., vers. 11-13.

THE Christian Ministry.

I. The Christian ministry is simply this: a teaching, a helping, of men's personal feeling and life. The man who seeks to change his ministry from a teaching and helping into a priesthood, an official prerogative, whether as a sacrificer or an absolver, is false to the fundamental idea of Christianity and its ministry. Every necessity of sacrifice is provided in the one sacrifice of Christ, "offered once for all"; every necessity of revelation is provided in the inspired and authoritative Scriptures. All that is now necessary is that men should be taught about Jesus Christ and induced to accept Him as their Redeemer from sin. And this is the sole function of the Christian ministry; we simply preach Christ crucified.

II. Another great idea is unity in diversity, the harmony of diversified functions in the ministry of the Church. Elsewhere St. Paul insists upon the harmony of diversified gifts in the same function. All Apostles, all evangelists, all pastors, all teachers, are not alike. They are as diversified as the members of the body, and with relentless and resistless logic the Apostle presses his argument: the well-being of the body demands diversity in its members, diversity in its gifts. Thus God's truth, like the phenomena of nature, is seen in many lights and on many sides. The great fundamental facts are unchangeable, but a thousand minds and hearts tell us their impressions of them; the very varieties of apprehension confirm them. It is a magnificent harmony of truth in which a thousand impressions and voices blend. Instead of being dissatisfied, let us rejoice in the diversified gifts and ministry of the Church.

H. ALLON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxi., p. 177.

REFERENCES: iv. 11-13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 292; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 216. iv. 11-16. —W. Cunningham, *Sermons*, p. 316.

Chap. iv., ver. 12.—"The work of the ministry."

I THE work of the ministry is a work for all believers, and a work for none but believers. The command to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature is a command given to all the disciples of Jesus Christ, and the exhortation to teach and admonish one another is intended for all Christian

people everywhere. If a Church choose, with a view to order and edification, to select one of its brethren to be its president and, in some especial manner, its pastor and its teacher, that does not by any means debar other brethren from engaging, and engaging largely, in this work of the ministry.

II. Our life as Christian workers is a life of work. There has been such a development of Christian agency and work, and of the various operations of a moral and religious sort in which Christian ministers are expected to take part, and almost must take part; and a pastor, if faithful and up to his work, must be full of work. It is a life of work, "the *work* of the ministry."

III. "The work of the *ministry*." That is to say, it is a work of service. We are servants in a twofold sense. We are the servants of Christ, and we are the servants of Christ's people. The former position, of course, is readily recognised; but let us not be so proud and so wilful as to refuse to recognise the latter. The Church does not exist for the ministry, but the ministry for the Church. The work of the ministry is suggestive of much toil and of much patient waiting. It is also a work of very solemn and awful responsibility. There is no other work which is weighted with such responsibility. But while we are deeply and solemnly impressed with the responsibility, do not let us be dismayed or run away from the work, but rather let us ask God to give us more diligence and faithfulness and courage, that, like Paul, we may be able to witness that we are free from the blood of all men. It is very pleasing to see the results of this spiritual labour and to see those to whom the word has been preached living, by God's grace, in the enjoyment of the light and peace of the truth of the Gospel. Disappointments there are, certainly, and bitter and terrible they are. There is, nevertheless, not a work in all this world which can compare with this in the greatness and permanence and glory of the reward.

H. Stowell Brown, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 761.

References: iv. 12.—H. S. Brown, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 266; Fraser, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 25. iv. 13.—G. Butler, *Sermons in Cheltenham College*, p. 243; A. Stanton, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 65; C. Short, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 305; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 308; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. v., p. 289.

Chap. iv., ver. 14.—"That we be no longer children, carried about with every wind of doctrine."

Modern Thought: its Influence on Character.

The words "modern thought" are used by not a few in our

day as a badge of reproach. For the emancipated children of the Reformation to disparage thought simply for its modernness is, indeed, passing strange. Unless our thinking be modern, we have no thinking at all. All the thinking that has ever been done in the world has been "modern" in its day. Let us clear our minds of any timid prejudice against thought as modern, and, in the name of Him who has given us mental powers and has placed us in the present age, let us all try to be modern thinkers, pondering all that can affect our life and duty with reverent boldness, as did those spiritual ancestors whom we most admire. On the other hand, let us beware of idolising what is modern. Many who have scarcely begun to think, and certainly have never thought, seriously, broadly, or profoundly, pick up the phrases of the hour, and talk about being "abreast of the age," as if newness were a test of truth rather than a call for investigation.

I. There is an intellectual stream of tremendous force connected with the physical researches of this century by which character is affected in many powerful, but in some respects subtle, ways. Modern science has helped theology by giving us new measures of time and new standards of greatness and wisdom. The enthralling interest and beauty of various modern sciences and the fascinating effect of dazzling theories based upon so many sure and certain discoveries of fact tend to absorb attention and to exclude things spiritual from many studious minds.

II. Another way in which modern scientific thought influences character lies in its tendency to regard all our thoughts and activities as the necessary results of our physical antecedents and environment. Be not driven about by every wind of hasty teaching offered in its name. There is no knowledge so sure and clear as self-consciousness. Be true, then, to the voice of conscience within. Cultivate the powers of moral judgment, that your senses may, by reason of use, be keener to discern good and evil.

T. V. Tymms, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 401.

References: iv. 14.—T. Hooke, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 173; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, vol. ii., pp. 327, 343. iv. 14, 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 449.

Chap. iv., ver. 15.—"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up unto Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ."

The real test of all religion is, and must be, its power to raise and to regenerate the life of man. There are three chief needs which the life of man must fill up. He has in him the lower

nature of the flesh, with its appetites and its passions, by which he is fast bound in the chains of this material world; and that flesh must be subdued to the spirit, to the indestructible will, to that superior power of reason, to that clear voice of conscience, to that glowing spirit of love, by which alone he is able to rise above the material world. He is, again, on the one side, bound up in this life, on which are written at every turn the characters of transitoriness and of death; and yet he is so to move in this life as to satisfy his inner consciousness of immortality, his capacity and longing for a higher life. He has also the reality of his sin in its loathsomeness. The test of the truth of religion must be its power to aid men in filling up their great needs.

I. The first part of this great principle is simply the speaking truth, or rather the being true in action, in word, and in thought. This, again, has more than one form. It bids us to seek for truth; it bids us to speak truth in ourselves. In the first lies all the power of progress, and on the second is laid the basis of human society. What is it to seek truth? Truth is the law established in many forms by God Himself. The Gospel has all the characteristics of truth.

II. To speak truth is only one small part of this great principle. The principle is *to be true*, to be that which we claim to be. In this alone is there safety against falsehood. St. Paul finds in love that spirit which gives new life to truth, and in which, as in a Diviner region, the truth moves free from all those taints which would sully its brightness. We must be true in love, and so grow up into the Head, because we are members one of another.

III. We see how this love strengthens and intensifies the spirit of truth. There is, doubtless, a delight in truth. From him who feels a positive glow of love, especially for those who love and trust him, the very thought of falsehood is far away. To be true is to fill the place which is set us in this world, to rise above all secondary motives to that which is the highest guide of man. BISHOP BARRY, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 276.

CHRISTIAN Growth.

The doctrine of our text is that true spiritual growth is to be sought in sincere, truthful dealing in our Christian relation to Christ and to them that are His, our fellow-labourers in Christ. Manifestly one might here divide the subject into two heads: truthfulness towards Christ and truthfulness towards them that are His. Into the first of the two points I shall not enter.

Paul looks at truthful dealing with the brethren as the form in which a sincere heart towards our common Head must mainly manifest itself.

I. First, then, the text assumes that if we are Christians our daily conversation will be mainly with our fellow-Christians. If our relations with our fellow-Christians were only occasional and accidental, it would be vain to think that our truthful discharge of those relations could ensure growth in the whole spiritual life; but the true Christian cannot be merely in occasional and accidental contact with those who are radically united to him in Christ.

II. Secondly, the blessed fruits of the fellowship into which we enter inwardly and spiritually in our union with Christ, and visibly and outwardly in our public profession of faith as members of the Christian Church, can only be manifested by truthfulness and loyalty.

III. Where there is this honesty of purpose towards the brethren, we shall be sure to find candour, simplicity, and plain truthfulness in every act of life.

IV. If our actions were always pure in the sight of God and man, if our Christian life were perfect, if we were not still under the power of sin, so often intent on selfish ends, it would be easy for us to be candid and sincere to one another. The test of Christian truthfulness is to be found in its power to assert itself as the rule of our life in spite of the sins that disturb even Christian fellowship.

V. Truthful dealing is possible only if, as the Apostle says, it is truth speaking "in love."

W. Robertson Smith, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 20.

References: iv. 15.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 60; *Homilist*, vol. i., p. 137; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 97; J. W. Lance, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 360; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 409; *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 298; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 294; F. W. Robertson, *The Human Race*, p. 94; S. Martin, *Sermons*, p. 211. iv. 16.—Archbishop Benson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 1. iv. 17.—F. W. Macdonald, *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 156.

Chap. iv., vers. 17, 18.—"That ye walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."

The Life of God.

I. Let us see what St. Paul means when he talks about the Gentiles in his day. For that also has to do with us. I said

that every man, Christian or heathen, has the same duty, and is bound to do the same right; every man, Christian or heathen, if he sins, breaks his duty in the same way, and does the same wrong. There is but one righteousness: the life of God; there is but one sin, and that is being alienated from the life of God. The one disease to which every man is liable is that we are every one of us worse than we ought to be, worse than we know how to be, and, strangest of all, worse than we wish and like to be. Just as far as we are like the heathen of old, we shall be worse than we know how to be. For we are all ready enough to turn heathens again at any moment, my friends; and the best Christian in this church knows best that what I say is true: that he is beset by the very same temptations which ruined the old heathens, and that if he gave way to them a moment they would ruin him likewise. For what does St. Paul say was the matter with the old heathens?

II. "Their understanding was darkened." But what part of it? What was it that they had got dark about and could not understand? For in some matters they were as clever as we and cleverer. What part of their understanding was it which was darkened? St. Paul tells us in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It was their hearts—their reason, as we should say. It was about God and the life of God that they were dark. They had not been always dark about God, but they were darkened; they grew more and more dark about Him generation after generation; they gave themselves up more and more to their corrupt and fallen nature, and so the children grew worse than their fathers, and their children, again, worse than them, till they had lost all notion of what God was like.

III. The heathens of old might have known that, if they had chosen to open their eyes and see. But they would not see. They were dark, cruel, and unloving, and therefore they fancied that God was dark, cruel, and unloving also. They did not love love, and therefore they did not love God, for God is love. And therefore they did not love loving; they did not enjoy loving; and so they lost the Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of love. And therefore they did not love each other, but lived in hatred, and suspicion, and selfishness, and darkness. They were but heathen. But if even they ought to have known that God was love, how much more we! For we know of a deed of God's love, such as those poor heathen never dreamed of. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son to

die for it. Then God showed what our eternal life is: to know Him who is love and Jesus Christ, whom He sent to show forth His love; then God showed that it is the duty of, and in the power of, every man to live the life of God, the life of love.

C. KINGSLEY, *Sermons for the Times*, p. 198.

Chap. iv., vers. 17-19.

THE Walk of the Gentiles.

I. As to the nature of this walk, one leading feature or characteristic of it is vanity of mind. The life of men walking in the vanity of their minds is either all but wholly aimless, or else its aims are mean and frivolous, or at the best disappointing, tantalising, and unsatisfying. The character of vanity is stamped on all its pursuits and pleasures, on its worship, such as it is, and on all its works and ways.

II. Now the cause of this dismal and disastrous state of things is indicated in ver. 19. On the one hand, men are darkened in respect of their understanding; they are spiritually blind: on the other hand, they are alienated from the life of God. By the life of God we are to understand the life which consists in glorifying and enjoying God; the life for which man was made; life in God, with God, to God; God's own life in the soul of man; life of which He is the source, the centre, and the end. Thus the root of the disease is double. It is in the mind and in the heart. The mind is wilfully ignorant; the heart is wilfully hardened. Therefore there is neither light in the mind, nor love in the heart, and therefore there is vain walking.

III. The natural result or issue in the case of other Gentiles or worldly men is explained in ver. 19. A terrible course of possible declension is pointed out. There are several stages in it. First, there is your walking like others in the vanity of your minds; secondly, there is your being darkened in your understandings; thirdly, there is your alienation from the life of God; and fourthly, there is a giving of yourselves over to a life of mere and thorough self-seeking and self-indulgence, in some form or other. Surely, then, the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 107.

THE Immorality of the Heathen.

There is a startling contrast between the earlier and the later chapters of this Epistle. In the earlier chapters Paul describes the Christians at Ephesus as saints, as the faithful in Christ

Jesus, etc.; and now to the persons whom he has described by these sacred titles, and to whom he has spoken of these Divine mysteries, he gives a succession of precepts relating to the most elementary moral duties. He thinks it necessary to warn them against the basest and the coarsest vices: against lying and thieving; against foul speech; against drunkenness; against gross sensual sins.

I. The access of the Divine life does not at once and in a moment change the man's moral temper and habits. Moral distinctions which were faint will not at once become vivid; moral distinctions which were not recognised at all will not at once become apparent. The Christians at Ephesus had been breathing from their childhood the foul atmosphere of a most corrupt form of heathenism; they were breathing it still. In the community which surrounded them the grossest vices were unrebuked by public sentiment. Christian righteousness is achieved slowly. A Divine life is given to us, but the life has to grow. There will, however, be real ethical progress wherever there is genuine loyalty to Christ.

II. The description of the heathen both here and in the Epistle to the Romans is to be taken as representing their general condition. Speaking broadly and generally, heathen men had lost the knowledge of God, and had lost the knowledge of the steadfast and eternal laws of righteousness, and this is what Paul means when he says that they were walking in the vanity of their minds. We are environed by an invisible, Divine, and eternal world. When once that world has been revealed to us, our whole conception of human duty and human destiny is changed; we discover that it is only the larger world that has been revealed to us by Christ which is real and enduring; we see that the true life of man is the eternal and Divine life by which he is related to what is eternal and Divine, that the true honour, the true wealth, the true wisdom, the true happiness, of man are found in that eternal and Divine kingdom.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 294.

REFERENCES: iv. 17-20.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 380. iv. 18.—*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 313; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 20; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 218.

Chap. iv., ver. 19.—"Who, being past feeling."

SPIRITUAL Insensibility.

I. There is a certain pitch of wickedness at which moral insensibility comes on; and when *that* comes on, the case be-

comes almost hopeless. There is little prospect of repentance or reformation then. No matter how bad any poor sinner has been, there is still some hope so long as you can get him to feel. It is one of the last and worst symptoms of the soul's condition when feeling is gone. That is arrived at by most men only after a long continuance in iniquity; and *that* is an indication which gives sad ground for fearing that the Holy Ghost, without whom we can never feel anything as we ought, has ceased to strive with that hardened soul, has left that obdurate heart alone. We all run a great risk of becoming so familiar with spiritual truths that we shall understand them and believe them without feeling them, without really feeling what their meaning is, and without that degree of emotion being excited by them that ought to be excited. And if it be true that even the converted man, in whom what we may call the organs of spiritual perception have been quickened from their native paralysis, and the capacity of spiritual emotion in some good measure developed, by the working of Divine grace, has to wonder and lament that he believes so much, but feels it so little, we need hardly be surprised to find that in the case of most unconverted men living in a Christian country, and probably frequenting a Christian church, there is a perfect numbness of soul; as regards spiritual things they are, in the full sense of the words, "past feeling."

II. While we never forget that in the case of even a true Christian it is a sad thing when as years go his religion appears to be always growing more a thing of the head and less a thing of the heart, and while we are well assured that no one will lament *that* more than the true Christian himself, let us remember that such a train of thought must not be pushed too far. It would be very wrong if the aged believer were to fancy that because his religious feelings are growing less keen, less easily excited than in former years, he must, therefore, conclude that he is backsliding from his God and leaving his first love. He is causing for himself needless sorrow when he so acts and thinks. It is just that he has grown older, and so less capable of all emotion; but his choice of Christ may be just as firm and his religious convictions as deep as ever.

III. It is only to such as have really some good ground for hoping that they have believed in Christ that all this should be any ground of comfort. But if a man be not a believer, and if when he listens to the declaration of the doctrines of the Cross he understands them, but does not feel them; if he knows

thoroughly well that whosoever does not betake himself to the great atonement of Christ must perish eternally, and if he knows too that he himself has never gone to Christ and never prepared to die; and if, with all this, he does not care—ah, *then* there is a sad and a fearful explanation of how he comes to be so. Let it be your earnest prayer and endeavour at once to go to Him who came to seek and save the lost, lest the Holy Spirit, without whom you can do nothing, may be finally grieved away.

A. K. H. Boyd, *The Graver Thoughts of a Country Parson*, p. 106.

References: iv. 19.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 305; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 166. iv. 20.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 164.

Chap. iv., vers. 20, 21.—"But ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard Him and have been taught by Him."

I. We have here distinctly affirmed that the living voice of Christ Himself is our teacher. "Ye have heard *Him*," says Paul. Remember that the New Testament everywhere represents Christ as still working and teaching in the world; remember that He Himself promised the prolongation of His great work of declaring the Father beyond the limits of His earthly life, and that no more in proverbs, but plainly; remember that He has pledged Himself to send the teaching Spirit of truth, in whose coming Christ Himself comes, and all whose illuminations and communications are showing and imparting to us the things of Christ. Every living soul may have, and every Christian soul does have, direct access for himself to the living Lord, the eternal Word.

II. Those who are in Christ receive continuous instruction from Him: "and have been taught by Him." These words seem to imply the conditions of the gradual process of Christ's schooling. His teaching is not one act, but a long, loving, patient discipline. The first feeble motion of faith enrols us as disciples, and then there follows through all the years the "teaching to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded."

III. This gradualness and slowness of instruction is brought out still more distinctly if we look at the third idea which is contained in these words: as to the substance of the instruction. The theme of the teaching is the Teacher: "Ye have not so learned Christ." Then our lesson is not thoughts about the Lord, but the living Lord Himself, not the doctrine of Christianity only, but Christ, the theme as well as the Teacher.

A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Manchester*, 2nd series, p. 61

I. Let us glance at the truth in Jesus. (1) The life of Jesus opposed and contradicted that which was false and wrong, and in this respect the truth was in Jesus. (2) Jesus embodied the truth of truth's symbols. (3) Jesus spake truth, that which, on account of its importance to man, is *the truth*. His truth is eternal, universal, new.

II. Let us show what cannot be learned by those who have only heard and been taught by Christ. (1) Nothing childish can be learned of Christ. (2) A shifting and accommodating creed is not learned of Christ. (3) Pious frauds are not learned of Christ. (4) A literal and carnal interpretation of Christ's laws is not learned of Christ. (5) Truth framed according to system is not learned of Christ. (6) Nothing contrary to the Godlike can be learned of Christ.

S. Martin, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 81.

References: iv. 20, 21.—D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 365; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 14th series, p. 61.

Chap. iv., vers. 20-24.

I. When the phrase, "the truth as it is in Jesus," is used, it is probably almost always intended to imply, if nothing more, at least this: the great doctrine of human sin and of the redemption of mankind by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we should separate these two things which God has graciously joined together and take by itself that truth which the Old Testament contains, viz., the truth that man has fallen under the wrath of God, we should have a truth, but a truth emphatically as it is not in Jesus Christ; we should have the truth as it appears in its coldness and blackness and wretchedness, apart from that which has lightened it up and made it tolerable, even the smiles of Him who was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

II. It would be giving a somewhat different view of the matter, though it would after all be substantially the same, if we were to say that the truth as it is in Jesus ought to be taken as our expression of that belief concerning the Lord Jesus Christ which is contained in the Apostles' Creed. To this general view of the truth as it is in Jesus many persons would be disposed to make several additions. They would be disposed to include within the limits of this truth, not only the knowledge of what God has done for us, but the knowledge of what we must, on our part, do in order to apprehend Christ and make our calling and election sure. Right views of faith and the saving,

justifying power of faith would enter largely into this conception of the truth as it is in Jesus, or of what may be called Gospel truth. The manner in which we are to avail ourselves of the love of God is of course infinitely important; yet, after all, it is nothing as compared with the love itself. Christ is the foundation; Christ is the Truth; and the manner in which we build upon the foundation is, in the very nature of things, second to the fact of our having a foundation whereon to build.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 5th series, p. 290.

THE Christian Method of Moral Regeneration.

I. A complete moral revolution is not accomplished either by one supreme effort of our will, or by any momentary shock of Divine power. It must be carried through in detail by a long, laborious, and sometimes painful process of self-discipline. The process lasts as long as life lasts. For with the changing years there are changing forms of moral evil which have to be resisted and put away from us. The earlier triumphs make the later triumphs easier, but do not release us from the hard necessities of battle. (1) Self-examination is necessary. Our moral habits must be compared, one by one, with the commandments of Christ, and their conformity to the genius and spirit of Christian ethics must be patiently and honestly tested. (2) There must be self-discipline as well as self-examination. We must put away our old self. The whole structure of our former moral character and habits must be demolished, and the ruins cleared away, that the building may be recommenced from its very foundation.

II. The truth which the Apostle assumes had been taught to the Ephesian Christians required them to be renewed in the spirit of their mind. The "spirit," which is that element of our life which comes to us direct from God, and by which we are akin to God, restores to the mind its soundness and health, the clearness of its vision, and its practical force and authority. In this high region of our nature Paul finds the springs of moral regeneration. It is by the discovery of the invisible kingdom of God that we learn the laws by which we are to be governed in the external and accidental relations of this transitory world. Regeneration must be followed by renewal. The Divine life given in the new birth must be fed from its eternal springs, or the stream will soon run shallow, will cease to flow, will at last disappear altogether. We must be renewed in the spirit of our mind.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 308.

REFERENCES: iv. 20-24.—*Homilist*, 1st series, vol. v., p. 326; 3rd

series, vol. v., p. 241; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 331.

Chap. iv., ver. 22.—"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts."

I. Note the very significant, though brief, outline sketch of the facts of universal sinful human nature which the Apostle gives here. (1) The first of the characteristics of the sinful self is that every Christian life, whatsoever the superficial differences in it, is really a life shaped according to, and under the influence of, passionate desires. The desires are meant to be impelling powers. It is absurdity and the destruction of true manhood to make them, as we so often do, directing powers, and to put the reins into their hand. They are the wind, not the helm; the steam, not the driver. (2) The words of the text not only represent the various passionate desires as being the real guides of the "old man," but they give this other characteristic: that these desires are in their very nature the instrument of deceit and lies. The way never to get what you need and desire is always to do what you like, because (*a*) the object only satisfies for a time; (*b*) the desire grows, and the object of it does not. Whoever takes it for his law to do as he likes will not for long like what he does. (3) These deceiving desires corrupt. In whatever direction we move, the rate of progress tends to accelerate itself.

II. Note how we have here the hopeless command to put off the old man. That command "put off" is the plain dictate of conscience and of common sense, but it seems as hopeless as it is imperative. But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son, did: He condemned sin in the flesh. So we come to—

III. The possibility of fulfilling the command. The context tells us how this is possible. The law, the pattern, and the power for complete victory over the old sinful self are to be found "as the truth is in Jesus." Union with Christ gives us a real possession of a new principle of life, derived from Him and like His own. We shall die with Him to sin when, resting by faith on Him who has died for sin, we are made conformable to His death, that we may walk in newness of life.

A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 105.

References: iv. 22-24.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 207. iv. 22-30.—H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 351. iv. 23.—*Homilist*, vol. vii., p. 104.

Chap. iv., ver. 24.—"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

I. The great purpose of the Gospel is our moral renewal: "the new man," created in righteousness and holiness. Notice (1) the profound sense of human sinfulness which underlies the text. (2) The Apostle specifies as the elements or characteristics of this new nature righteousness and holiness.

II. A second principle contained in these words is that this moral renewal is a creation in the image of God.

III. This new creation has to be put on and appropriated by us. That process of assumption has two parts. We are clothed upon with Christ in a double way, or rather in a double sense: we are found in Him, not having our own righteousness, but invested with His for our pardon and acceptance; we are clothed with His righteousness for our purifying and sanctifying. There is the assumption of Christ's righteousness which makes a man a Christian and has for its condition simple faith; there is the assumption of His righteousness, sanctifying and transforming us, which follows in a Christian course as its indispensable accompaniment and characteristic, and that is realised by daily and continuous effort.

IV. Finally, the text contains the principle that the means of appropriating this new nature is contact with the truth. (1) Let us learn how impossible are righteousness and holiness, morality and religion, in men unless they flow from this source; (2) let us learn the incompleteness and monstrosity of a professed belief in the truth which does not produce this righteousness and holiness.

A. Maclaren, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 119.

Chap. iv., ver. 24.—"And that ye put on the new man."

I. "The inward man is renewed day by day." This renewing is to be sought after and to be cherished. A Christian is not to wait for its coming; he is to secure its advent.

II. Further, these changes are to be made manifest. When a Christian is renewed within, the renewing is to appear. It is not to be kept secret, but is to be shown, just as the newness of life in the vegetable kingdom is shown in the buds, and in the expanding leaves, and in the formative blossoms.

III. The new man consists, not of words merely, or of one class of actions, but of the entire human development. The

characteristic of the new man is godliness, and its distinctive features are righteousness and true holiness.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 93.

REFERENCES: iv. 24.—*Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 159; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 398. iv. 25.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 115; W. Braden, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 225; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 158.

Chap. iv., ver. 26.—"Be ye angry, and sin not."

ANGER, Noble and Ignoble.

In this injunction, delivered by St. Paul to a body of Christians, the privilege and duty of anger, as well as the danger attending its display, are fully recognised. They might be angry; they must be angry. Circumstances would continually arise to call out this emotion. They were not to crush it, only to watch it, lest it changed from a feeling worthy of God into one worthy only of the devil.

I. What then is the emotion which is here by implication commended? Anger is not the same as temper, or irritability, or ill-humour, or hatred; anger is displeasure strongly excited: that is its definition. An enthusiasm of love for righteousness includes an enthusiasm of hatred for evil; and this last emotion is called in one word "anger."

II. To be capable of anger is a strength, and not a weakness. Think of St. John, the very Apostle of charity, but also the son of thunder, who lay upon his Master's breast, and who in his last hour bade his children love one another as the completest gospel he would leave to them—think of him and the fire of indignation that burned in him at the thought of wrong. He could denounce not the less, but the more, because he loved much. Only he who loves much knows what it is to feel that anger which is ennobling and Godlike.

III. "Be ye angry, and sin not." The warning follows the injunction to remind us how easily the holy feeling may merge in the unholy. Self is always ready to creep in and usurp the place of the holier object. Let anger do its work, and then dismiss it; let it fire you to protest, to denounce, to witness against evil. Put the fire that is kindled in you to its one righteous use, but do not make a plaything of it, or it may consume you. Aim to rise into that higher region where God is and where self is annulled; aim to be so filled with the Spirit of God that obedience is freedom, and not slavery. And

this you will attain by the study of the character and the words of Christ, for they are spirit, and they are life.

A. AINGER, *Sermons in the Temple Church*, p. 166.

REFERENCES: iv. 26.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 388; Bishop Stubbs, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., p. 209; R. W. Dale, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxv., p. 81; J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 11. iv. 26, 27.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 147.

Chap. iv., ver. 27.—"Neither give place to the devil."

"WHO is the most diligent bishop in all England?" asks old Hugh Latimer in one of his quaint sermons. "I will tell you: it is the devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; he is ever applying to his business; his office is to murder religion, to set up idolatry."

I. We may be sure of this: that the devil never means good, but always evil. Sometimes he approaches Christian people in the garb of an angel of light, and deceives them by vain words. The more we yield to him, the further he will press his authority, and the more complete will be his dominion over us. It is much easier to keep him out than to get him out when once he has gained possession. A reason why we should be of good courage and resolute in resisting the assaults of the devil is that no one is obliged to yield to him.

II. Note some of the ways in which people do give place to the devil. (1) The soul that is not filled with good thoughts and desires is left empty for the enemy to enter. (2) Another way in which people put themselves in the power of the great adversary is by yielding to spiritual indolence. Industry and watchfulness distinguish all real Christians. As soon as they become indolent, they cease to be on their guard against the enemy of souls. (3) Another favourable opportunity which Christians too often give to Satan to do them serious mischief is the absorbing attention which they pay to their worldly business. If their business only proves safe and profitable, they care very little about how far it extends itself. There is danger in this all-engrossing attention to worldly pursuits. Many Christians have found, to their sorrow, that it is one of the fatal ways of giving place to the devil.

J. N. NORTON, *Every Sunday*, p. 343.

REFERENCE: iv. 27-29.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 275.

Chap. iv., ver. 28.—"Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

ST. PAUL'S Exaltation of Labour.

I. When we look on one side of St. Paul's character, it is so full of spiritual fervour and rapture, there is such aspiration in it, such ardent pursuit of large ends, he is so wrapped in his great mission to convert the world to the revelation of Jesus Christ, that, arguing from what we know of men, we should be inclined to expect that his high spiritual mission would have drawn his mind away from the humbler duties of man and from thinking much of ordinary life; we should know that he must recognise such duties, but we should not expect him to dwell upon them, to have them much on his mind, and to be always recurring to them. But it is remarkable that with St. Paul this is the case. He often recurs to the plain and quiet work of humble life. It has no low place in the scale in his estimate, as if it were necessary to be done, but did not rank as religious work. No; he regards it as spiritual work and elevating work.

II. The eye which St. Paul has to the goodness of humble labour is only a sample of a general predilection in him which extends to other qualities. He chooses the sober and plain class of duties as his test. A man doing well duties not of a showy sort, for which he gets no particular credit—this is his rule of fitness for a conspicuous post and a post of authority. Men form their religious standards by two tests: one the law of conscience and obedience to God; the other what is striking to man. Of these two St. Paul's test is very easily seen to be the former. Throughout his Epistles he recurs constantly to it. "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? or Who shall descend into the deep? for the word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thine heart."

J. B. MOZLEY, *Sermons Parochial and Occasional*, p. 222.

REFERENCES: iv. 28.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 393; F. Williams, *Ibid.*, vol. iii., p. 314.

Chap. iv., ver. 29.—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

I. ONE special talent by which we may glorify God and our Saviour and edify one another is the gift of speech. The tongue is called in Scripture more than once man's glory. As

the first duty of the heart is to God, so is the service of the tongue due to Him. Prayer and praise are the first duties of the tongue, its highest and holiest uses. How it is used it is awful to think: how much more in profaning God's holy name than in praising it, how much more in cursing and swearing than in blessing Him. To talk about religion may be easy to an irreligious person, but never at all to say an unholy thing, nor to speak in an irreligious tone, argues a holy and a truly religious mind.

II. This leads us to that second use of the tongue, which regards our communication with each other. God forbids all bad use of the tongue before He enforces its true use. He says, "I say unto you"—as if to call our special attention to it—"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment, for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Can it be that Christians, talking as they do, ever think of that sentence, those who would fain persuade themselves that they speak without thinking and swear without meaning anything? Surely the tongue, which is the means by which we hold intercourse with each other, should be a means by which we edify one another.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. vii., p. 184.

REFERENCES: iv. 29.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 355; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 259.

Chap. iv., ver. 30.—"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

THE Sealing of the Soul.

The presence of the Holy Ghost in the soul is many things. It is the life of the soul; it is the teaching of the soul; it is the comforting of the soul; it is the consecration of the soul; it is the purification of the soul; or rather all these things have in Him their central point. But it is one thing more: it is the sealing of the soul.

I. You have some valuable property, it may be gold or jewels, and you are going abroad for a season. Anxious for your precious things, you gather them carefully up, and you put on them your seal, your name to the seal. The seal marks them yours while you are away, and secures them from being lost or stolen. So long as they are under the seal, they cannot be removed or hurt; and you look to find them in this sure

keeping when you come back. You are Christ's precious jewels. Your great Proprietor, who has spent so much on you, is gone away for a time; He has gone to a far country: but He is to return, and when He returns His longing desire is to find you unharmed and beautiful, and still His own. Therefore He has put His seal upon you. It is a fast seal, and a royal one; His own name and His own likeness are on it. No thief, no injury, no loss, no accident, can come near to touch you.

II. The day of redemption is plainly the day of the resurrection, that day of Christ's appearing, when the whole work of your redemption will be complete. The sealing is not for this life only, neither is it only for the soul. It is for the body; it is for the grave. But it goes on even to the resurrection, to the day of redemption. The dust of the saints is sealed; it is quite safe, loved and cared for: and the grave's casket will be opened when He comes, and you will find the gem bright and untouched. Do not grieve the Spirit of God by doubting it.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 151.

I. IN Divine, as in natural, truth, it remains with the soul to accept or to reject the truth proposed to it by God; to embrace it purely or to corrupt it; to deny its existence or its own power to discern it; to abandon contemptuously all search for truth, resolving all into one maze of doubt. But it can do so only on the same principles whereby men may deny the certainty of all natural knowledge, abdicating the implanted powers of the soul and denying the light, natural or supernatural, infused by God within them, and their own consciousness. These are awful words: "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." All, then, on God's part, has been complete. We received the Holy Spirit as a living seal upon our living souls; to mark and to guard us, as His purchased possession and peculiar treasure; to impress, one may boldly say, His image, His likeness, His features, upon our souls.

II. But meanwhile He has left it in our power to accept or reject Himself, our only and infinite good. He appeals to us with Divine tenderness that we do it not. I fear that one o the things which will most amaze us, when we open our eyes upon eternity, will be the multitude of our own rudenesses to Divine grace, that is to God the Holy Ghost, whose motions grace is. Grace came to us so tenderly: it never did violence to us, or it did such gentle violence; it ever came to us in a

way adapted to win our individual being. Ardent natures the Spirit sets on fire for good; before active natures He sets activity in His service; easiness of disposition He hallows by the glow of His love; the cold iron of severity He tempers by His fire into the bending steel of strong devoted purpose. Let not, then, His seal upon you mark you as a deserter. "Thy Teacher is within thee"; pray to Him, listen to Him, with a hushed heart, and He in His own time will teach thee.

E. B. PUSEY, *University Sermons*, p. 338.

CONSIDER one or two of the consequences of a grieved Spirit.

I. Whenever you grieve the Spirit, you cause sorrow—it is God's own word—to Him to whom you are bound by every generous feeling to give only happiness. Few persons are sufficiently aware of the debt which they owe to the Spirit. Think you it is no sacrifice for a Being of perfect holiness and immaculate purity to come and dwell in such an abode as a sinner's heart, amidst the scenes of daily life, there, in the closest of all possible contact, to bear with all He hears and sees and feels, there to be constantly planting seeds which we root up, shedding light which we darken, drawing bands which we break, whispering voices which we drown? Surely, therefore, it should be the first spring of our hearts—a sufficient motive to a holy life, even if there were no other—to give, not grief, but joy, to Him who, with such pains and at such cost, invites our love and claims our gratitude.

II. Every time we grieve the Spirit we weaken the seals of our own security. As soon as a man has peace, the Holy Spirit gives him, in the strength of that peace, holiness. The peace is the consequence of the pardon, and the holiness is the consequence of the peace, and both are seals, the peace seals the pardon and the sanctification seals the peace. Break any one of these seals, and your safety is in the same proportion diminished, and every grieving of the Spirit is a defacing of an impression and a loosening of one of the seals.

III. There are four deep, downward steps in the path to death. To grieve the Spirit is the first; to resist the Spirit is the second; to quench the Spirit is the third; to blaspheme the Spirit is the fourth. No one of these is ever reached but by going through that which is previous to it; but he who grieves the Spirit by a thought or an omission may soon resist the Spirit by some more overt act of direct opposition, and he who thus resists the Spirit wilfully may soon wish to put the Spirit

out altogether from his heart. Let the consummation of the tremendous series teach the true character of the first imagination which lies upon its slope, and give emphasis to the solemn word, "Grieve not the holy Spirit of God."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 45.

REFERENCES: iv. 30.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 278; vol. xiii., No. 738; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 326; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 220; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 17; E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 239; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 276; E. White, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 40; S. Slater, *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 100; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 355; G. John, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 74; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 234; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 193. iv. 31.—Bishop Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 289.

Chap. iv., vers. 31, 32.

LOVE the Foe and Conqueror of Selfishness.

Christianity denies the assumption, and challenges it all along the line, that pursuit of the higher life need be, in any sense or degree, necessarily selfish. It may be selfish, but it is just as possible that it is wholly otherwise. And more, in all its most energetic and effectual types it is sure to be unselfish, for selfishness is never, as a practical fact, able to kindle into life the more fervent and daring forms of self-assertion. The selfish man seeks his own good, after all, but very sluggishly; it is the unselfish Apostle who pursues it with the zeal of a martyr and the passion of a saint.

I. What exactly does it mean to say that one's own good is selfishly sought? It is selfishly sought only when it is desired for the sake of the gratification it brings, for the sake of the honour and pleasure and gain it may reflect upon its possessor, that is, when it is not sought for its own sake, but only for the sake of what it brings after it. No man has ever produced the highest artistic work for the sake of the pleasure it brought him; such an aim inevitably drains the life-blood out of his heart, and in business and in all employments the same impulse tells. That is the best workman in all employs who works for the sake of the work. Wherever throughout a country the artistic motive in work languishes, there the productions deteriorate and the trade must fail. That is the verdict of a world-wide experience, and Christianity seizes on it in its primary truth.

II. Nor is it only the joy of the artist that is the seed of vigorous action; there is another motive, even more powerful,

more universal, and more fruitful: the motive of love. A man will do far more for the love of others than he will ever do for himself; he will display a finer vigour, a nobler patience, a steadier courage, a fuller energy, on behalf of mother, and home, and wife, and children, by the side of which the efforts he will make on behalf of his own interests will look but poor and thin. Unselfishness is the only salt that preserves our soundness; unselfishness is the only fire that purifies, and refines, and betters, and makes perfect. We shall be enabled to do so much only if we love. We live by loving, and the more we love the more we live; and therefore, when life feels dull and the spirits are low, turn and love God, love your neighbour, and you will be healed of your wound.

H. Scott Holland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 193.

References: iv. 31, 32.—R. L. Browne, *Sussex Sermons*, p. 285; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 181. iv. 32.—Spurgeon *Sermons*, vol xi., No. 614; vol. xxiv., No. 1448; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 59; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 344; J. Edmunds, *Sermons in a Village Church*, 2nd series, p. 321.

Chap. v., ver. 1.—"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children."

Christ's Acts of Love the Christian's Model.

I. Christ took our flesh that in it He might go up and down among us; that in it He might be seen by us; that in it He might speak to us, and leave deeds and words which might, in characters of love, be traced in our souls, and there live on for ever. He came among us in order to set before us, in His own Divine person, the loveliness, and beauty, and majesty of Divine love and Divine holiness. The life of Christ is the whole sum of the Christian's life. Whatever holiness the Holy Spirit has wrought in any of the saints is wrought after that pattern. By meditating on that life, we live with Him, converse with Him, enter into His holy and hallowing society. Through studying Him we know how to follow Him; through following Him we understand what we study. And so, by a continual round, the contemplation of Him kindles our souls to long to be like Him and to copy Him; to copy Him enlightens our eyes, and clears away the film which dims their sight; and that sight, through His Spirit, transforms our spirits into the likeness of Him whom we behold.

II. And now what should we so behold, so adore, so copy,

as the love of Jesus in act, in word, in thought? Our love must be (1) supernatural, (2) self-sacrificing; (3) it must embrace all whom Christ loves; (4) it must not be deterred by that which is repugnant to nature.

E. B. PUSEY, *Parochial and Cathedral Sermons*, p. 197.

REFERENCES: v. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1725; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 61; *Homilist*, vol. i., p. 241; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 239. v. 1, 2.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, p. 158; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 347; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 156.

Chap. v., vers. 2, 8.—"Walk in love. Walk as children of light."

I. "WALK in love." Here we have a command founded upon a reason: "Walk in love, as Christ hath loved us." Yes, of all forces love is the most powerful as a force to act upon others. Pure, disinterested love is all but irresistible, all but, not quite; for if it were quite irresistible, then the world had been converted long ago. I think St. Augustine was right when he said that the most wonderful thing he knew was that God could love man so much, and man could love God so little. It looks sometimes as if God had never loved the world, as if Jesus had never died for the world, as if there were no such thing as love at all.

II. But then we come to the other command: "Walk as children of light." Now light, of course, is put for knowledge, as darkness is put for ignorance. Well, the light shows us what otherwise could not be seen; it reveals to us what otherwise were unknown. Now the one who walks as a child of light sees the things that it is needful for him to behold, if he too would avoid the perils, would escape the evils, of the journey, and direct his way aright towards the everlasting home. But then, again, remember that the light shines. It falls on others. The child of light not only walks wisely and safely, but he shines; he is a reflected light, not like the sun, which shines with its own inherent intrinsic light, but like the planets, which shine with borrowed light. It is Christ shining on them and in them which makes Christian people to walk as children of light.

BISHOP WALSHAM HOW, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 161.

REFERENCE: v. 4.—A. Ainger, *Sermons in the Temple Church*, p. 296.

Chap. v., ver. 6.—"Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."

LIGHT-HEARTED Wickedness.

I. Trifling with sin is open disobedience to God. No one can say that the directions of our heavenly Father are not very plain on this subject. There is no disguise in His word; there is nothing that can be misunderstood. All through the Bible, like a low, rolling thunder, as it were, afar off, is heard this utterance from heaven: "Because of these things cometh the wrath of God." Neither is there any disguise in the acts of His providence. Here, if anywhere, we see His visible hand. In the decrepitude of tainted lives, in the disappearance of polluted races, is written with large letters in His own hand that "because of these things cometh the wrath of God."

II. The certainty of God's wrath on sin. The deception of vain words with regard to it takes, I suppose, this form: Is God's wrath so certain? Are we sure we see it? Are there not so many instances of evil lives unpunished as greatly to qualify that certainty? I would ask you, first of all, to notice that St. Paul by no means says, "The wrath of God *is come*." He says, "It will come," or more exactly, "It is coming," and while we do say that God's displeasure is already very visible and not to be mistaken, we say also that there is no reason to think that even where it has been most visible it is spent or exhausted.

III. St. Paul speaks of disobedience, and he speaks of punishment, as for *outsiders*, not for those to whom he directly writes. To them he uses different arguments: sin and trifling with sin in word or jest for them are not convenient, *i.e.*, not appropriate. What is appropriate for them is that which becometh saints. They have no consciousness henceforth of guilty secrets, nor even of doubtful acts and words. This is the actual service of God; this is a happy service: killing with a good will evil inclinations which we have determined and vowed to kill, carefully preserving, carefully gaining, all old, all new, ideas and habits which we have proved tend to holiness, or which we have reason to believe will help us still onward.

ARCHBISHOP BENSON, *Boy Life*, p. 126.

REFERENCE: v. 6.—F. Exton, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 64.

Chap. v., ver. 8.—"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

LIGHT in the Lord.

I. "Ye were darkness." Assuredly these words ought not to apply to us at all in the same sense in which they applied to the Ephesians, brought into fellowship as we are at our baptisms with Him who is the Light no less than the Life of men and who illuminated them. They *ought not* to apply to us, and yet must not each of us set our seal to these words as in their measure only too true of him during all the time that he failed to realise to the full his baptismal privileges and the things which were freely given him of God? And if we are now light, is it any other than light in the Lord? We have tried, some of us, what it is to walk by some other light than His, in sparks of our own kindling, or following those foolish fires which, born of earth, can never guide to heaven, and on earth itself can only mislead and betray. We too have discovered that there is only one light for man, and that light is in Him who is Himself the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

II. If it be asked, What are the sins which the children of light are, so to speak, by their very name pledged to renounce, and what the graces which, by their very name, they are pledged to follow after? I should not hesitate to say that this name does, in the first place, exclude, or ought to exclude, on the part of them that bear it, all fraud, falsehood, trickery, untruthfulness in word or deed; does demand on their parts uprightness, sincerity, straightforwardness, and manly truthfulness of dealing as between man and his brother. You are children of light, and the vocation of the children of light is to remove the darkness, not to share it. This you must do, or if you fail to do it, be sure that a day is coming when the light into which you were called, but in which you refused to walk, shall reprove you and make manifest your deeds, that they were not wrought in God.

R. C. TRENCH, *Sermons in Ireland*, p. 133.

REFERENCES: v. 8—J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 10; J. Fraser, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 189; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vi., p. 142; Obbard, *Plain Sermons*, p. 134. v. 8-10.—E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 127. v. 8-32.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 86, 88, 89.

Chap. v., ver. 9.—"For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

THE Fruit of Light.

We ought to read, "The Fruit of Light." It is all about

light and darkness, as we see here. "Spirit" has been introduced instead of the word "light." The text should read, "The fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth."

I. Christ is the revealed God. He came into the world to brighten it. The true Light now shines; it has continued and spread; it is going all round the world. There is light in the book; there is no such book of light anywhere as the Bible. But God has not put the light in His book merely, but in His people, that are called lights in the world.

II. How does the light tell? Why, by its simple presence. It reproves and exposes the darkness just by its presence. It has no need to make an assault on the darkness and say, "I am opposed to you and going to put you out"; it just puts it out by existing. The light from above shines into the hearts of believers, and that light is to be exhibited to men in their characters, and dispositions, and lives. Three words are here used to describe the fruit of the light, that is to say, three aspects of the Christian character: the good; the right; the true. (1) Goodness. Of course it is a comprehensive term opposed to all evil, but especially to all malice. St. Paul obviously means here kindness in feeling and act: kindness in feeling, which we call benevolence; kindness in act or deed, which we call beneficence. We want this living inherent goodness in ourselves, and then ours will be good deeds, goodness which finds its loving outlet without difficulty in words or works or patient and unselfish kindness. (2) What is the second point? Righteousness. That is opposed to all crookedness and dishonesty, and it is inseparable from the highest types of goodness. This is the very strength of our religion: that it maintains the eternal rule of right and twines its tenderness and its hopefulness round about the immutable pillars of justice. (3) Truth. Of course this is opposed to lying, which is one of the works of darkness, and must be put away. God desires truth in the inward parts, and He knows that naturally we have not got it. He puts truth into our heart by putting Christ into it.

D. FRASER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 344.

REFERENCE: v. 11.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 137.

Chap. v., ver. 13.—"All things which are reproved are made manifest by the light, for whatsoever is made manifest is light."

THE Light of God.

I. Light comes from God. God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all; and therefore He wishes to give light to His

children. He willeth not that the least of them should be kept in darkness about any matter. Darkness is of the devil; and he who keeps any human soul in darkness, let his pretences be as reverent and as religious as they may, is doing the devil's work. True, there are errors of which we will not speak to the young, but they are not made by God; they are the works of darkness. Our duty is to teach the young what God has made, what He has done, what He has ordained, to make them freely partakers of whatsoever light God has given to us. Then, by means of that light, they will be able to reprove the works of darkness.

II. Under the influence of true science, God will no longer be looked upon, as He was in those superstitions which we call dark, as a proud, angry, capricious Being, as a stern Taskmaster, as One far removed from the sympathy of men, but as One of whom we may cheerfully say, Thy name be hallowed, for Thy name is Father; Thy kingdom come, for it is a Father's kingdom; Thy will be done, for it is a Father's will, and in doing Thy will alone men claim their true dignity of being the sons of God.

III. Our progress, alas! is not yet perfect. We still see through a glass darkly, and we are still too apt to impute to God Himself the darkness of these very hearts of ours in which He is so dimly mirrored. Let the dead bury their dead, and let us follow Christ. Believe indeed that He is the likeness of God's glory and the express image of God's person, and you will be safe from the dark dreams with which men ensnare diseased and superstitious consciences. Let them be. Light is stronger than darkness, love stronger than cruelty, perfect God stronger than fallen man, and the day shall come when all shall be light in the Lord.

C. KINGSLEY, *Sermons for the Times*, p. 160.

REFERENCES: v. 13, 14.—C. Kingsley, *National Sermons*, p. 190. v. 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xii., No. 716; R. W. Church, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 233; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 213; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 376; vol. viii., p. 227; C. J. Vaughan, *Words of Hope*, p. 137.

Chap. v., ver. 15.—"See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise."

CHRISTIAN Prudence.

I. We Christians were never meant to be remiss and insensible; Christ came to redeem and renew us in every legitimate faculty and every salutary use of it. It was never intended

that the world should go onward in improvement and the Church should stand still. The redemption of Jesus Christ was wrought to comprehend man's whole nature and man's whole history; there is no lawful advance of mankind, no wholesome invention, which the Church may not include in its instruments for God's glory, and by neglecting which it does not lose space and power for its work, no symptom of the state of men's minds and of society which it ought not to turn to account for its high purposes.

II. We need to walk circumspectly both in belief and in practice. We have nothing to lose, but everything to gain, by more search, more light, more intelligence, surer ground. Every new discovery, every new good argument, will serve, not damage, Christ and His work. Here, then, let us walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise. Lament not, stand not aloof from, the questioning, searching spirit of the age; but take it and use it for good. In practice also we need many a circumspect walking as to both the good and the bad habits and influences around us. There are better things in life than being rich, than being powerful, than being notable. Measure thyself, not by thy wishes, but by thy graces; not by thine ambition, but by thy capacities. Strive to do what thou canst do well, and to serve when thou canst serve with a pure conscience; but aim not at duties which thou canst never thoroughly perform, and at offices which thou canst not satisfactorily fill. If we are walking circumspectly, can we avoid hearing such voices as these sounding about us? If we are not fools, but wise, shall we not admit them to a place in our counsels and in the formation of our plans in life?

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 136.

References: v. 15.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 172; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 25; F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 110; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 203. v. 15, 16.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 353.

Chap. v., vers. 15-17.—"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil," etc.

Redeeming the Time.

I. The words of the text in the English version have become proverbial, "Redeeming the time"; but the words of the original, although they would hardly bear to be differently translated, are even more expressive: buying up the opportunity; not missing anything of what the passing moment

has to give. And if the call is significant, so also is the reason of the call: "because the days are evil." To some men the feeling that they have fallen on evil days has an enervating and paralysing effect. They spend their time in inquiring why the former days were better than these, or torment themselves and others with timorous apprehensions concerning the future. Not so reasoned, not so acted, the leaders of the early Christian congregation. Although "the days darkened round them, and the years;" although they thought that the world in which they lived was doomed to destruction, coming suddenly in an instant; yet this made to them only more imperative the duty of proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of heaven, of using this world as not abusing it, of living to the glory of God. And if the same spirit is amongst us still, making those who partake of it in any measure to be as He was in the world, it will be like a sharp goad within them, ever driving them onward to "redeem the time." It is true that as individuals severally we can do very little; but that is the reason why we should all together resolve to be up and doing, to awake and live.

II. The Apostle warns us that in order to redeem the time, to buy up the opportunity, we must seek to understand the problem of our age; in other words, we must ask what our Lord would have us do as Christians. We cannot err in thinking that God is calling us in this present age to diffuse as widely as possible every element of good; to draw class and class together, or rather to draw together man and man; to diffuse the treasure that was saved to us in the ark of the early Church; to bring all the rays of goodness and truth that shine upon us from the past or from distant lands into one focus, to harmonise them through a liberal application of the Spirit of Christ. Let us then make full use of the opportunity, and eagerly buy up the golden hours while they last, in the deeply grounded hope and faith that even this age may be made a means of blessing to the coming ages. The Christian aim and motive are not bounded by the horizon of time, and we believe that every true endeavour on the side of good, every right word and noble act, though it may fail of earthly continuance, though it may find no acceptance amongst men, has yet a place among the eternal things, and is of enduring value in the sight of God.

L. CAMPBELL, *The Christian Ideal*, p. 223.

REFERENCES: v. 15-17.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31. v. 15-21.—*Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 302.

Chap. v., ver. 16.—"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

I. "THE days are evil." They are felt to be so (1) on this account, for one thing: that they are subject to so many things which are out of men's power, independent of their will and control. They are liable to have so many untoward things happening to them, which no one can prevent or even foresee. (2) Another point of experience to the same effect is that the days are darkened by spectacles of evil, especially to persons of much moral and religious sensibility. (3) Men as individuals are forced to feel that their days are affected by the general evils of the times; and there is to each one more or less the share of the evils of mortal life: the bodily disorders and pains; the cares; the disappointments; the afflictive deprivations. (4) The uncertainty of our days may be regarded as in some respects an evil circumstance. (5) All the days partake of death.

II. "Redeeming the time." The evils incident to the days render it a very difficult thing effectually to redeem the time; they form a grand conspiracy to waste and devastate it, to seize and plunder it from us. But this all enforces so much the more the benefit, the obligation, the necessity, to redeem it. (1) To this end, it is of the highest importance that time should be a reality in our perception and estimate; that we should verify it as an actual something, like a substance to which we can attach a positive value, and see it as wasting or as improved as palpably as the contents of a granary or as one of the precious metals. (2) Another main thing towards redeeming the time is this: to keep in mind certain important purposes or objects that absolutely must be attained. Nothing short of the redemption of the soul is the true and effectual redemption of time, and this object gives the supreme rule for the redeeming of time. Let us apply this rule, and implore the Divine Spirit to make its authority irresistible upon us.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 93.

REFERENCES: v. 16.—W. Baird, *The Hallowing of our Common Life*, p. 6; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, p. 45; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 55; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ix., p. 153; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 126; M. Nicholson, *Redeeming the Time*, p. 1.

Chap. v., ver. 17.—"Be not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."

CHRISTIAN Discernment of God's Will.

I. The great thing after which an intelligent Christian should strive as his daily guide in life is, not a diplomatic reference to

the literal text of Scripture, still less to this or that tenet or watchword of a party or system, but a large measure of the spirit which was in Christ—the spirit of love, and of power, and of a sound mind, that he should walk and live not a fettered man, subject to a few forms of words never perhaps examined as to their true sense, but a free man, consulting and judging and determining for himself by the help of God's word, ready, in case of emergency or difficulty, to act on his own behalf, for the good of others, and for God's glory in all, without that hesitation which sacrifices opportunity, without that scrupulousness which is the death of energy and the worst omen for success; that he should be able to fulfil, at all the turns and occasions of life, that Scripture command, the very secret of all real action and abiding good, "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

II. Let us not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is, as regards our fellow-countrymen. They want the means of grace; let us be wise in time, and supply them. It is our duty to cast aside all punctilious adherence to conventionalities which will repulse them and to try every expedient which God has placed in our power to bring the Gospel of Christ under their notice. We know it to be the only remedy for their social and moral ends; let us be eager and in earnest in applying that remedy. H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, p. 80.

REFERENCES: v. 17.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 190. v. 17, 18.—W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 231.

Chap. v., ver. 18.—"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

CHRISTIANITY and Temperance.

St. Paul here contrasts two kinds of excitement. God does not love the sort of languid and lazy being which nothing stirs, and nothing stimulates. Excitement has its place in the Christian system. That flow and rush of the natural spirits which is so dear to youth and health, finding expression alike in the games of the boy and in the recreations of the man, is not in itself a wrong thing. The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ makes room for it.

I. St. Paul introduces the particular precept of the text in subordination to two others. One is the precept of charity, and the other is the precept of purity. St. Paul knew how to keep the proportion of Christian morals as well as of Christian doctrines, and never misplaced and never exaggerated in the

enumeration or in the enforcement of particular vices and virtues. At last he reaches the text, which comes in as an example of that circumspect and accurate walking, "not as fools, but as wise," which suits those who live, as we all live, in evil days, that is, days of great peril, arising out of strong temptation: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess."

II. In fighting against drunkenness, we fight against vice of every kind and of all kinds. The war which lames one antagonist is virtually the war against a legion. We must be filled with the Spirit. Of all the treasures of the Church in this age surely this is the greatest and the most prevailing; and surely of all the crimes of this age the greatest is not the disregard of Christ the Propitiator, but the neglect of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. How faint and intermittent are our prayers for the Spirit; how feeble and how vacillating is our hold upon His presence. We would force ourselves back into the days of Christ's flesh, or at the best we would sit for ever at the foot of the cross or at the mouth of the rich man's tomb, closed, sealed, and watched. We will not live in the light of the great Easter, and we will not bask in the sunshine of the great Pentecost, and therefore it is that we live this half-life, downcast, disconsolate, and sin-bound, and never listen to the experience which tells of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus setting us free from the law of sin and death.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 308.

REFERENCES: v. 18.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 589; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 163. v. 19.—F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 305; *Ibid.*, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 121; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 56.

Chap. v., ver. 20.—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

I. THE duty of giving thanks is that duty which of all others may be declared natural to man, and which can be declined by none but those whose dispositions almost prove themselves not human. Men are capable of gratitude and well accustomed to give it expression, but, through some mysterious blindness or perverseness, they overlook or deny the prime Benefactor, and, recognising not His hand, they give Him no praise. There are two reasons to be given for this phenomenon. (1) The first is the practical atheism which loses sight of a First Cause, and idolises second causes; the second is the repugnance there is in our nature to own itself dependent.

II. The duty of thanksgiving becomes still more evident when we consider the subject matter of gratitude. Look (1) at the small or everyday mercies. There is no stronger evidence of human littleness than the disposition to overlook this or that thing as little. God cannot give what is small; He can give nothing which required not Christ's blood as its purchase money. And shall a favour which was worth the Crucifixion, a favour which Deity could not have granted unless Deity had taken flesh—shall this be defined as small by our narrow arithmetic? (2) We also owe God thanks for what men count evils. The advantages of affliction are so many and great, affliction serving as medicine to the soul, and medicine being so needful to souls diseased with sin, that we have reason, not only to be content, but to rejoice in all the crosses and vexations with which we meet. Let a man be renewed by the Holy Ghost, and he will not fail, if visited by troubles, to believe and feel that "all things work together for good," and therefore to class afflictions amongst benefits.

H. MELVILL, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2204.

THE Duty of Thankfulness in all Things.

I. Each person has some one particular trial under which he is not disposed to be thankful, but secretly to complain. He is inclined to think that this trouble or trial is of all others that which is the most difficult for him to bear, that any other than that which oppresses him he could bear with patience. It is very likely the case that the trial which he labours under is indeed of all others the severest to him. The most obvious reason why our heavenly Father sends any trial or affliction upon us is, doubtless, often this: to draw our hearts off from the world and to fix them more upon Himself. The point, therefore, in which He is most likely to disappoint, and therefore to distress, each one of us is that on which our worldly hearts are most set, for there our particular danger most lies. Many are the cases of this kind in which we may see that the trial which is put upon us may indeed be the very hardest for us to bear with thankfulness. We must make such trials a subject of prayer, and if we continue to do this, praying that God's will may be done in us, and not our own, they will at length become subjects of praise also. If we had nothing to lament, we should have nothing to desire.

II. As far as this world is in our hearts, we may well go mourning and disquieted all our days, and see in all things

great and small and in all persons matter of complaint; and if we live in this temper, doubtless we shall die in it, and if we die in it, we shall be no company for happy angels, but rather for unhappy and lost spirits, for of him who loves the world we know that the love of the Father is not in him. It may be said that a thankful spirit is a happy spirit; but this temper is required of us, both because this thankfulness is in itself a great duty to our heavenly Father, and because we shall never be able to fulfil our great and important duties to God and our neighbour without it.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. vii., p. 217.

I. THAT many things are occasions of thankfulness to God all will naturally allow, but that in Jesus Christ we are to give thanks for all things and at all times sounds almost strange in our ears, and we too little consider how very certain and how very important this duty is. If we will only remember what it is that all true religion consists in, as set before us in the Bible, we shall perceive how very necessary a part of it is thankfulness, not as an occasional feeling, or to be called forth by particular circumstances only, but for all things and at all times. Every Christian is required to love God with all his heart, and soul, and strength, and he who does this, or sincerely endeavours to do so, will be thankful, not merely for one thing only that God sends, and murmur at another, but will be thankful for all things that his heavenly Father is pleased to give him. For this is the very nature of love; he who loves another will receive anything from him, not weighing the value of the gift, but receiving it with welcome because it comes from him he loves. And the love of God implies the fullest confidence and rest in His infinite goodness and a full assurance that He ever gives that which is best for us.

II. If we consider all religion to consist in faith, we must still come to the same conclusion. And if there is any misgiving, any difficulty, any impossibility, of being cured and benefited by Him, it is on account of our want of faith. So far, therefore, as we have this faith, it is very evident that we *shall* give thanks for all things at all times. No Christian can have life without this love of God and this faith in Him, and no one can have this love and faith without being always thankful; and, therefore, every Christian must be always thankful. No one can be truly thankful but he who is humble; and we cannot be humble

unless we mourn constantly for our sins. Let us give thanks to God always for all things, not only for the daily comforts which He showers down upon us, but, above all, giving Him thanks for His fatherly chastisements.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol. vii., p. 211.

REFERENCES: v. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1094; W. V. Robinson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxix., p. 13; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 406. v. 22-24.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 17.

Chap. v., vers. 22-31.

ON Marriage.

I. Consider how the earthly and the heavenly views of Christian marriage which the Apostle presents to us are thoroughly one, and cannot be separated. It was an old delusion that the Christian who wished to give himself up to the influences of the Spirit, to obtain the salvation of his soul, and to win even in this life something higher than its transitory things, could do no better than to withdraw himself as far as possible from this world and to flee at once from its pleasures and its business, its sufferings and its cares. From this delusion arose a long-continued and mistaken idea of looking on the holy state of matrimony. How very far is this delusion from being sanctioned by the Apostle's words. For when he points to the connection between Christ and the Church, is that union in any sense identified with a morbid contemplative life? Must it not have cost the Lord toil to take captive all these thousands? It is only in common, social life that men's happiness and well-being have room to grow, and only by a judicious division of work that each becomes distinctly conscious of his own powers; and so also it is only through this Divine arrangement that we find out what special gifts the Spirit of God has created in each family, and both husband and wife, earnestly working together at their everyday duty, at once find out what is their own work and enjoy their work in the vineyard of the Lord.

II. While there is in these two sides of marriage a great apparent dissimilarity, it is needful that we be convinced that even this dissimilarity resolves itself into the most perfect likeness. Look, first, at the dissimilarity. When the Apostle says husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church, we know that this is a love which not only permits, but requires, love in return, seeing how constantly we are exhorted to love

Him who has so greatly loved us; but we know also that it is, from another point of view, a love that is raised far above all reciprocal love, seeing that the Church cannot in any way repay Christ, her Redeemer, and can do nothing for Him, but only go on receiving from Him a more and more complete redemption. Now if, in the same way, the wife can do nothing for her husband, but be always receiving from him, then the wife is in a bad case as regards the husband, and the woman is always at a disadvantage. But let us remember that it is impossible for a comparison between Christ and men to apply at every point; and of course the relation of wife to her husband cannot in every particular present a parallel to that of the Church to Christ. Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify her; the husband is to take this self-sacrificing love as his example, gladly returning from his wider circle in the busy world to the quiet of his fireside, there to share with the wife of his heart all that is purifying or elevating in what he has met or done or felt. And thus in their life together will be more and more fully realised that which is only promised to the Church in her relation to Christ in the distant future, that we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is, as the wife, without leaving her quiet,° modest sphere, becomes ever more like her husband, because she both understands and influences him in all his ways and actions.

F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Selected Sermons*, p. 130.

REFERENCES: v. 22-31.—W. E. Colles, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 99. v. 23.—J. Irons, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 265. v. 25.—G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 44; H. P. Hughes, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxv., p. 266.

Chap. v., vers. 25-27.—**"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church," etc.**

I. THE love of Christ. None of us, it is truly said, is a stranger to this master emotion of the human soul. Flowing through the earth like streams amid desert sands, shining in life's darkest nights like stars in a wintry sky, throwing its bright bow over every cloud of fortune, this world owes to love more than to anything else what blessedness it enjoys. Life without it would not be worth the having; and without it, though we had a house, and that house a palace, we could not have a home. In human love we see much to admire, but in that of God there is a something that eludes our grasp when we

endeavour to fathom it, and which baffles our conception as we try to find it out. God only knows the love of God.

II. The practicalness of Christ's love. He not only loved the Church, but He gave Himself for her. It is an easy thing to make great profession of affection; it is quite another thing to carry out and prove our profession. Christ was not only a Preacher, but a Sacrifice.

III. The sublime design of His love: "That He might sanctify and cleanse His Church with the washing of water by the word, and that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church." Christ loved the world before ever there was a Church in it, and determined, out of the very ruins of the Fall, to build up for Himself a temple worthy of being inhabited by Himself. He saw the resplendent future to which she was heir by His grace, and so He loved the Church. (1) The Divine Spirit is the efficient cause of this cleansing, but the word or the Gospel is the instrumental cause; the Spirit accomplishes His work of cleansing by means of the truth. (2) That He might present her to Himself a glorious Church—glorious in her position, immunities, and honour, not having a spot, for the redeemed shall be without fault before the throne. No wrinkle of decay shall mar her countenance, or blemish of sin.

J. W. Atkinson, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 976.

References: v. 25-27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 628; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 80; W. Landels, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 376; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 13; *Sermons on the Catechism*, pp. 184, 197; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 101. v. 27.—Parker, *Cavendish Pulpit*, p. 95. v. 30.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xx., No. 1153; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 101. v. 31.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 353.

Chap. v., ver. 32.—"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church."

Sacramental Mysteries.

I. The question of baptismal grace—when it is conferred, or the conditions upon which it is conferred at all; the manner in which the body and blood of Christ are really and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper; the nature of that union which consequently takes place between Christ and the soul—all this is veiled and shrouded. We have no reason to believe that God intended these things to be exactly defined; we have no warrant, even if we had ideas, to deal with things so exquisitely pure and intensely spiritual. Why wish to

take them out of the regions of pure faith? And yet man and man's tribunals are called upon to reduce these matters to the exactness of a science, and clothe them in terms which shall carry along with them a legal criticism.

II. Mark one or two aspects in which marriage shadows out Christ and the Church. The bride surrenders all her property to the man, and hence calls nothing her own; the bride submits her dependence to the man, calling him lord and master. Her very life from that moment runs in his; and, according to the strictness of law, she can have no private right, she can hold no separate existence, she loses herself, and lives only in her husband: while, on the other hand, he undertakes for her in all things. She bears his name; she claims his love; she shares his property: he represents her before the world; he is responsible to pay all her debts; he provides her all she wants. So Christians have no independence, but find it far happier to lean only upon Christ; they cannot order their own steps, but it is far better that Christ should order them for them. He steps forward as their Representative; their place is at His side; their home is in His happiness. Far from heaven they can never be, for they can never be divided from Him; and His word has gone forth in covenant love that where He is they shall be for ever and for ever.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 41.

REFERENCES: v. 32.—A. G. Maitland, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 398; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2624. vi. 1.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 149. vi. 1, 2.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 408.

Chap. vi., vers. 1-4.

CHILDREN and Parents.

I. St. Paul assumes that the life of children may be a life in Christ. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord, and parents are to nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord. Every child, apart from its own choice and before it is capable of choice, is environed by the laws of Christ. It is equally true that every child, apart from its choice and before it is capable of choice, is environed by Christ's protection and grace in this life, and is the heir of eternal blessings in the life to come. Christ died and rose again for the race. Children may obey their parents in the Lord before they are able to understand any Christian doctrine;

they may discharge every childish duty, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God, before they have so much as heard whether the Spirit of God has been given; they may live in the light of God before they know that the true light always comes from heaven.

II. Paul had a sensitive sympathy with the wrongs which children sometimes suffer and a strong sense of their claims to consideration. Children are to obey and honour even unreasonable, capricious, and unjust parents; but it is the duty of parents not to be unreasonable, capricious, or unjust. The precept, "Nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord," implies a real and serious faith on the part of the parents that their children belong to Christ and are under Christ's care. Christian education is not a mission to those who are in revolt against Christ. The children are Christ's subjects, and have to be trained to loyal obedience to His authority. The education of which the Apostle is thinking is practical rather than speculative; it has reference to life and character rather than to knowledge. By "the chastening of the Lord" the Apostle means that Christian discipline and order of the family which will form the children to the habits of a Christian life. "Chastening" is not chastisement, though chastisement may sometimes be a necessary part of it. The order of a child's life is determined by its parents, and is to be determined under Christ's authority, so that the child may be trained to all Christian virtues. The primary condition of a successful Christian education is that the parents should care more for the loyalty of their children to Christ than for anything besides, and the second is that parents should expect their children to be loyal to Christ.

R. W. DALE, *Lectures on the Ephesians*, p. 378.

REFERENCES: vi. 1-4.—H. W. Beecher, *Plymouth Pulpit Sermons*, 5th series, p. 167. vi. 2.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 213; J. H. Wilson, *The Gospel and its Fruits*, p. 205.

Chap. vi., ver. 4.—"In the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

I. THE Lord brings up His disciples from the beginning of life.

II. The Lord nourishes and cherishes His disciples; He is not a mere Teacher: He is a Trainer. He helps us to learn, and when our courage sinks He revives it.

III. The Lord exhorts, warns, and restrains. There is nurture and there is admonition in the bringing up of Christ's disciples by their Lord.

IV. The Lord unites with Himself by trust and love those whom He brings up.

V. The Lord's work of bringing up is without intermission; He is always about it.

VI. Let your instruction and your training have the Lord's teaching, the Lord's warnings, the Lord's doctrines, for their means, and the Lord Himself for their end.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 175.

THE Christian Training of Children.

Consider—

I. What is included in, and what is meant by, all our dealings with the young who are growing up among us tending to their discipline: all that we teach them or enjoin on them, or give or deny them. Discipline is by no means synonymous with punishment, though in common conversation we are accustomed often to use it so, but something entirely different. The heart can be disposed to God only by love, which drives out fear, and with fear all the power of punishment. But discipline which aims by steady exercise to control and regulate every emotion and to subdue all the lower instincts of nature under the rule of the higher imparts a salutary knowledge of the power of will, and gives an earnest of liberty and internal order. The larger the place which is given to discipline in our method, the more must punishment lose its effect; because the young mind is already practised, it refuses to have its decisions influenced by considerations either of pleasure or the reverse. It is difficult to keep a clear conscience in this important business. How shall we keep it void of offence? Certainly in no other way than this: we must neither set before ourselves any worldly aim in the training and education of our children, nor teach them to think of anything merely worldly and external as the object to be gained by it; but rather, putting out of view all other results, we must try to have them made distinctly conscious of what powers and capacities they possess which may by-and-by be used in carrying on the work of God on earth, and to have those powers brought under the control of their will by their learning both to overcome indolence and dissipation and to guard against being passionately engrossed in any single object. And this is just what the Apostle means. For instruction and training of all kinds so directed will only serve as discipline to the young, and only by such discipline will they acquire a real possession in the shape of a thorough fitness for

every work of God that in the course of their life they may find occasion to do.

II. But however excellent a thing it is to train our children by discipline, what is the highest thing that can be effected by this means? The preparing of the way for the Lord, that He may be able to enter, the adorning of the temple, that He may be able to dwell in it; but towards the actual entering and indwelling of the Lord discipline can contribute nothing. Does not the Lord Himself say that the Spirit moves where He will, and that we cannot so much as know, much less command, where He is to go? Yes, we recognise the truth of that word of Christ in this connection also, and therefore willingly confess our inability. But while acknowledging our helplessness, let us not forget that the same Saviour charged His disciples to go and teach all nations. This then is what we are capable of doing and what we are commanded to do: in our daily intercourse with the young to commend the mighty works of God, that we may stir up in their minds aspirations after a happier condition, and this is what the Apostle calls the admonition of the Lord. F. SCHLEIERMACHER, *Selected Sermons*, p. 163.

REFERENCES: vi. 4.—J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 253; J. G. Rogers, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 65; C. M. Birrell, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 360; W. Braden, *Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 269; R. F. Horton, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 314. vi. 5, 6.—J. B. Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 97; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 406; F. W. Farrar, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxiv., p. 296. vi. 5-8.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 4; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 185. vi. 5-9.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 427. vi. 6.—S. Gladstone, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxii., p. 280; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 92. vi. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1484; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., pp. 85, 88.

Chap. vi., vers. 7, 8.—"With goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men," etc.

LABOUR no Hindrance to Spiritual Progress.

I. Servants may be described as servants of Christ. If the Church is regarded, according to the Scriptural imagery, as a kingdom or household, of which Christ is the Head, we may argue that all the members of which it is composed are the servants of Christ; so that, however different their occupation, they all serve the same Master. You could no more spare the Christian usefulness of the humblest individual, than the manual labour of the tiller of the soil, and would as much unhinge the Church by diffusing infidelity among the lower classes, as a kingdom by diffusing rebellion. The eye of the Master is as

much on one servant as on another, and His acquaintance with one as actual as with another; so that when we declare of a man that he serves the Lord Christ we mean a great deal more than when we make the like assertion of the various retainers in an earthly household. We do not merely mean that the duties which the man discharges are duties by whose performance the cause of Christ is advanced or upheld; we mean that the man is as actually employed by Christ and as actually working for Christ as though he had received directions from His lips and gave unto Him an account of his proceedings.

II. Those whose duties in life are of the meanest description may gain as high a recompense as those who move in the first walks of society. Every lawful employment, inasmuch as it is one department of the service of Christ, has a sacred character; and consequently we may be religiously occupied when occupied with our worldly callings, and it is to close our eyes to an ordinance of God to imagine that in working for the body we cannot also be working for the soul. The distinctions of men in their temporal capacity have no corresponding distinctions in their eternal; but however various the situations which Christians occupy, the reward of the inheritance is promised equally to all.

H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 2263.

References: vi. 7, 8.—W. Mercer, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 347. vi. 9.—J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 197.

Chap. vi., ver. 10.—**"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might."**

Weakness.

I. To the Christian human nature is not a poor, but an infinitely grand, thing; something from which not a little, but everything, may be expected; something which was made in the image of God, was assumed and glorified by God's own Son, has been the tabernacle of untold heroisms and saintly sufferings, and shall in the end be "renewed in knowledge and majesty after the image of Him who created it." So grand a thing as this can never find safety in weakness. It is a poor toleration which first disparages the dignity, and then tolerates the shortcoming. No, if weakness leads to wrong-doing, it is wrong to be weak; and, in the language of the Gospel, all wrong-doing is sin against God.

II. Weakness can very often be traced to want of foresight. It is weakness to follow a bad example. Yes; but might not

the crisis to which the weakness has proved unequal have been prevented by a little foresight? It is weakness, no doubt; but it is weakness which gives abundant warning of its presence. It might have been foreseen, and it might have been guarded against. And, again, there is that weakness which arises from unwillingness to face anything disagreeable.

III. Prayer, if earnest and persisted in, will most surely disclose to us sources of strength of which we should not otherwise have thought; it will show us those practical means of gaining strength which experience proves to be owned and blessed of God. Two of these I will refer to. (1) The first is the precise opposite of that fatal habit of which I spoke. It is the habit of *not* shrinking from what is disagreeable, the habit of facing a duty with alacrity and without delay. (2) And the second means is that of acquainting yourselves with the lives of God's greatest and holiest servants.

H. M. BUTLER, *Harrow Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 106.

REFERENCES: vi. 10.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 181; S. James, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 121; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 8th series, p. 246. vi. 10, 11.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 209; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 277. vi. 10-12.—J. Ellison, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 305. vi. 10-13.—H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii., p. 212; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xx., p. 277. vi. 11.—"*Literary Churchman*" *Sermons*, p. 1. vi. 11-18.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 275. vi. 12.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 79; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 90; vol. v., p. 31.

Chap. vi., vers. 12, 13.

THE Unseen Powers.

I. That which lies on the very surface of St. Paul's language is this commanding truth: that spiritual forces are much greater than material forces. It takes time and trouble for many of us to be really certain of this truth, because from time to time in the world events appear to contradict, or at least to overcloud, it; and yet in the long run the truth asserts itself, ay infallibly. A strong will is a more formidable thing than the most highly developed muscle. They, it has been said, who aspire to rule in permanence, must base their throne, not upon bayonets, but upon convictions and sympathies, upon understandings, and upon hearts. This is true within the sphere of human nature, and St. Paul knew that the Church had to contend with the thought and the reason of paganism much more truly than with its pro-consuls and its legions.

II. Behind all that met the eye in daily life St. Paul discovered another world that did not meet the eye, but which was, for him at least, equally real. Behind all the social tranquillity, all the order, all the enjoyment, of life, all the widening intercourse between races and classes, all the maintenance of law with a fair amount of municipal and personal liberty, which distinguished undoubtedly the imperial regime considered as a whole, behind all that spoke and acted in this vast and most imposing system, behind all its seeming stability and all its progress, St. Paul discerned other forms hovering, guiding, marshalling, arranging, inspiring, that which met the eye. "Do not let us deceive ourselves," he cried, "for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."

III. The contest of which St. Paul is speaking is not only to be waged on the great scene of history. St. Paul is speaking of contests humbler, less public, but certainly not less tragical, the contests which are waged sooner or later, with more or less intensity, with the most divergent results, around, within, each human soul. It is within ourselves that we meet now, as the first Christians met, the onset of the principalities and powers; it is in resisting them that we really contribute our little share to the issue of the great battle that rages still as it raged then, which will rage on, between good and evil until the end comes, and the combatants meet with their rewards.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 17.

Chap. vi., ver. 13.—"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God.'

THE reason expressed in this word "wherefore" is contained in the passage before the text. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood," says St. Paul, "but against spiritual wickedness in high places"—high, subtle, evil spiritual beings, ever ready and, but for God's great mercy and power shielding us, ever able to deceive us and to lead us astray.

I. It is not enough for a man to be satisfied that he has been brought into that relation to God which the Gospel brings, not enough for him to believe that once for all his sins have been washed away in the blood of the Lamb. There comes this question: Let a man have received this doctrine ever so perfectly and sincerely, let him have no doubt whatever as to the reality of the new relation as a redeemed one in which he stands to his God through Christ, is there a man living that sinneth not?

Can he still feel himself undoubtedly in that relation to God which the Gospel means with this sense of yet renewed sin upon him?

II. Our life is not to be a continuous vain seeking after repentance, but it is to be perpetually and always a humble, and penitent, and trustful following of God. We are "to grow in grace." Some men deny the doctrine of growth in grace, and maintain that the change must absolutely be perfect and entire, or it cannot have taken place; but as we improve in holiness we grow in grace and peace: as we struggle honestly, and by degrees more successfully, with our temptations, the faith which enabled us to start on this course, the faith with which we began, increases in our hearts.

III. The Gospel promise does not fail us because our infirmity to a certain extent grows up with our growth even as Christian men. Against all the snares of the devil God has provided a sufficient and sure defence in the promises of His Gospel. We are renewed day by day in the spirit and temper of our mind.

BISHOP CLAUGHTON, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 561.

REFERENCES: vi. 13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 394; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 24; *Ibid.*, vol. xiii., p. 381.

Chap. vi., vers. 13, 14.

I. NOTE the prohibition involved in the precept. It forbids (1) indolent or even weary sleep; (2) cowardly or even politic flight; (3) a treacherous or even a desponding surrender; (4) the declaration of a truce or even an application for it; (5) the giving up of a militant position until the war is fairly over.

II. What do these words demand? (1) They require a distinct and solemn recognition of the fact that the time of our life on earth is a time of war, "an evil day." (2) They require us to be always possessed by the conviction that we are personally called to this good fight. (3) They demand the honest and manly facing of our foes. (4) They require that, having taken the field, we keep it.

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 249.

REFERENCE: vi. 13-18.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 215.

Chap. vi., ver. 14.—"Stand having your loins girt about with truth."

CHRISTIAN Truthfulness.

I. It is obvious that the word "truth" as here used does not mean truth in the object, *i.e.*, the truth of the Gospel, the verities of redemption, but truth in the subject, *i.e.*, that which

we so commonly call truthfulness, a quality within the man himself. And this truthfulness, or being true, is predicated of him, not in ordinary things only, but, as he is a Christian, in those things which constitute him a Christian warrior. The girdle of the warrior's panoply would naturally be a girdle fitted for warfare, of the strength, and material, and pattern of the rest of his armour. And when we come to apply this similitude to practice, it is plain that we must think of this truthfulness, not only as regards words, the outward expression of thoughts, but also as regards acts, which are no less important results of a man's inward state; and indeed as regards those thoughts themselves from which both speech and action spring.

II. What is it to have the loins girt about with truth? (1) It is to have a man's own convictions in accordance with the revealed truths of the Gospel which he professes. Without this no Christian soldier can be girt for the battle. (2) All double purposes, all by-ends, all courses of action adopted for effect, are emphatically untrue; our object must not be only truth in detail, but truth in the due and real proportion of the whole. It is characteristic of a diseased conscience in this matter ever to be brooding over minute details, striving to be punctiliously, formally true, without inquiring whether the whole impression given is that which the whole facts really do give. And let us remember the great motive for truth which should be ever before us as Christians. We serve Him who is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning. When our Saviour left us, He bequeathed to us His best gift, the promise of the Father, the Spirit of truth, to dwell in us and possess us, and sanctify us wholly by that word which He Himself spoke of when He said, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth."

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. v., p. 151.

REFERENCES: vi. 14.—A. C. Price, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. i., p. 113; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. viii., p. 212; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., pp. 257, 305. vi. 14-17.—E. Garbett, *The Soul's Life*, p. 223. vi. 15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 368; *Ibid.*, vol. v., p. 27; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 4; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 230; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 136; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 350. vi. 16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 416; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 149; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 4th series, p. 379. vi. 17.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 205; J. H. Evans, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. xi., pp. 365, 377; *Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 248.

Chap. vi., ver. 20.—"I am an ambassador in bonds."

I. The ministers of Christ are more or less ambassadors in bonds; that is to say, they have not merely to contend with difficulties, but the difficulties they contend with are not fair ones. They do not get an equal hearing. But whatever difficulties from without beset the ambassador of Christ, he knows full well that the greatest of his difficulties are within: that his own tongue falters when it should speak plainly; that his own standard of holiness varies even in his thoughts, much more in practice; that long habits of self-indulgence paralyse him when he would exhort others to self-denial; that faults of temper mar his work and lose him the confidence of others; that in these and many other ways he loads himself with difficulty, rivets his own chains. These difficulties, he feels, are unfair ones in the way of his Master's cause. He is an ambassador in bonds.

II. The work, we know, changes as we advance in life. Like ambassadors, we are sent to different courts, recalled from one, despatched to another. But are we not all without exception, from the first years of sense and intelligence, distinctly and without a metaphor, sent out as ambassadors of Christ in the midst of an adverse world? The difficulties are great; the difficulties are such as may even rouse indignation in us. But there is risk in all noble attempts. The difficulty may be just overcome, the bar be only just surmounted; but that is as good for our purpose as though walls fell down before us, or as if we floated proudly into harbour with a hundred fathoms of blue water underneath the keel. Though in bonds, His ambassadors you are. Speak, then, in your Master's name; remember that the word of God is not bound.

Archbishop Benson, *Boy Life*, p. 236.

Reference: W. J. Woods, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 402.

Chap. vi.

I. The Apostle compares the struggles of a Christian against the enemies of his soul to the warfare of a soldier against the enemies of his country. What are the spiritual truths, the Christian graces, typified by these outward weapons? (1) The Christian's girdle is *truth*. To be sincere and earnest in our purpose, to have the heart engaged in the work, and the will turned honestly to the love of Christ, is the great security for consistent perseverance in the warfare against His enemies.

(2) The breastplate is *righteousness*; it is the inwrought righteousness of our Saviour. (3) The feet are shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace. By preparation seems here meant a foundation or firm footing. Resting on the strong support of the Gospel, the Christian soldier will be ready to meet and to resist all efforts for his destruction. (4) The Christian's life is pervaded and defended by faith. The reason why faith is a complete covering and protection to us is that it carries us out of ourselves, and bids us rest our hopes and affections on the Lord Jesus Christ. It teaches us to find in His life an unerring pattern for our conduct, a direct manifestation of God. (5) As the soldier's head is guarded by his helmet, so is the Christian's faith to be completed, his wavering mind stablished, and his faint heart encouraged by salvation. (6) The sword of offensive warfare is compared to the *word of God*, with which our Lord Himself drove away the assaults of the great adversary.

II. "Praying always." As all human life was a campaign against sin, in which Christ, the Captain of our salvation, led His followers to victory, so the prayers of Christians were the watches of sentries by which the camp of the Lord was guarded and all assaults of the enemy repelled.

G E. L. COTTON, *Expository Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. ii., p. 332.

PHILIPPIANS.

REFERENCE: i. 1, 2.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 42.

Chap. i., vers. 2, 3.

I. THINK of the beauty of the circumstance that Paul thanked God for the blessing of kind, loving, helpful men. Man serves God by aiding God's servants.

II. The more enlarged and susceptible the heart, the more easily can service be rendered to it.

III. Learn how good a thing it is to serve the great, and inferentially how sublime a thing it is to live and die in the service of the Greatest.

IV. Each of us should leave a memory that shall be cherished and blessed.

V. The Apostle stands forth to us as an illustrious man, while the Philippians are not known to us by more than their general name. The hidden workers are not on that account to deem themselves useless.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 176.

Chap. i., ver. 3.—"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

THE text speaks to us of the feeling which ought to exist between a minister and his congregation, more especially how he ought to be able to speak of them and what he ought to make his special prayer for them whenever, in the providence of God, he is for a time separated from them.

I. St. Paul was able to thank God, in his compulsory detention at Rome, for all that he remembered of his beloved Church at Philippi. Whenever he prayed, he was able to make his prayer for them with joy. He could think of them as earnestly and resolutely set upon practising and helping the Gospel; they did not shrink even from suffering for it. If St. Paul had been writing to us, could he have thus expressed himself? Could he have said with regard to the great bulk of our congregations that in their several stations, at their various ages,

according to their different gifts and talents, they were truly loving and living the Gospel?

II. One thing St. Paul was able to say alike for himself and for them: that there was the strongest possible tie between them of mutual love. Surely, where a minister and his congregation love each other fervently, there must be something of Christ in that feeling and in that place. St. Paul loved and was loved by these Philippians, and he showed and returned it by his prayers for them. He recognised and valued their affection; he felt that their love for him sprang out of love to Christ and showed itself in an active and diffusive charity. But he knew also that in this world it is not safe to rest on that which is; while we stay here, we must always be moving onwards: and what he desired for them was that their love might abound yet more and more in a deeper knowledge and a more experienced judgment. This great gift of judgment or, more exactly, of perception, comes only from being much with God, from being often in His presence, *hidden privily*, as the Psalmist expresses it, *in His pavilion from the strife of tongues*, from the conflicts of selfishness, from the din of earth.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: i. 3-5.—J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 422. i. 3-11.—J. J. Goadby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 152; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 48.

Chap. i., vers. 4, 5.

I. PRAYER may be varied according to the different spiritual moods of the suppliant. The mood need not impair the sincerity.

II. Christianity is the most influential of all heart-uniting forces. Men who are one in Christ are united in the highest ranges of their nature. Paul is in Rome, his friends at Philippi; but in the great heart of the Apostle Rome and Philippi are but different names of the same place. The union of the Church is guaranteed by the principles on which it is founded; the moral is the immortal.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 177.

Chap. i., ver. 5.—"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ."

I. IN the text we see age and youth together. (1) The old will contribute the wisdom of experience; the young will quicken the animation of hope.

II. In the text, though age and youth are together, yet age

takes precedence of youth. It is Paul and Timotheus, not Timotheus and Paul.

III. In the text, though age takes precedence of youth, yet both age and youth are engaged in common service. See how one great relationship determines all minor conditions and attitudes; looked at as before Christ, the one Lord, they were both servants. PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. i., p. 215.

REFERENCE: i. 5.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 216.

Chap. i., ver. 6.—"Being confident of this very thing: that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

THE Apostle lays down a great principle respecting the Divine method of working, viz., to begin is to finish, and that principle, wide enough to encompass the universe, will also comprehend every detail of Christian service.

I. God works by a plan; His plan is to prepare mankind for the final day.

II. God is not fickle in the prosecution of His purposes; He begins, not that He may conduct an experiment, but that He may perform a design.

III. God has so revealed Himself in the education of the individual and in the training of society as to justify the most emphatic expression of confidence on the part of His Church.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 178.

REFERENCES: i. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xv., No. 872; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. ii., p. 149; R. Davey, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 10; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 213; vol. vii., p. 217; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 108; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 289; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 245.

Chap. i., ver. 7.—"Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the Gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace."

A MAN in Rome carries the Philippian Church in his heart.

I. He who carries the world elsewhere than in his heart will soon wish to cast off his burden.

II. He who carries the good in his heart will never be desolate.

III. He whose heart is engaged with the tender offices of affection is the profoundest interpreter and the most efficient servant of mankind.

IV. He who enshrines his benefactors in his heart has broken the dominion of selfishness.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 179.

Chap. i., ver. 8.—"For God is my record how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

THE Tender Heart of Jesus Christ.

I. What is a tender heart? What is included in it? What is the chief characteristic of such a heart? A tender heart must always be a sensitive heart; where there is life there is sensitiveness; a tender heart is one ready to receive and retain the very softest impression; a tender heart is one that is endowed with a more than ordinary power to love; it is also a heart that is easily pained. A man of tender heart will be sure to live a life in harmony with it.

II. It was absolutely necessary that our Lord Jesus should be characterised by tenderness of heart. He had a nature that assimilated to itself the very griefs and sorrows of others. Christ's heart was intensely sensitive, and therefore subject itself to pain. It was the exquisitely tender nature of Christ that made the thought of being alone an anguish. Christ's heart, being tender, shunned giving pain. A truly tender heart will be agonised at the thought of having perhaps unintentionally wounded another's spirit. Then a tender heart not only is susceptible to pain, and not only shuns giving pain to others, but it will always feel the pangs that others endure. Over and over again this sentence concerning Christ occurs in the New Testament: "moved with compassion."

III. The tenderness of Christ's heart was shown by tender actions. The tender-heartedness of Christ comes out in every action; it is not shown merely in what He does: it is heard in what He says, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." We have not a High-priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Let us therefore remember that our Saviour is the tender-hearted Christ, and let us not grieve Him by our sins, but let us reflect to the world the beauty of His love.

ARCHIBALD BROWN, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 1099.

THE Source of Christian Love.

We see here—

I. The Witness of Paul's tender regard for the Philippians: "God is my Witness." This expression should be reserved for

periods of peculiar solemnity. Paul on the verge of martyrdom, not expecting to see these brethren again till he should meet them at the great white throne, takes the name of God, not in vain, but in reverent truth, into his lips, and confirms his testimony by his oath. It is healthful to the soul to be constantly reminded of another onlooker. God is not mocked. To go about the business and intercourse of life under the sense of God's presence would cast out all the malice and envy from the heart, would banish all falsehood from the lips. He requireth truth in the inward parts. As the mists of night are driven away by the rising sun, the face of God chases away malice and envy, so that they cannot harbour in the heart.

II. The source of his love for the brethren. He longed after them in the compassion of Jesus Christ. From that fountain his own pity flowed. Partakers of Christ as far as their finite nature will permit, Christians partake also of His affections towards the Church on one side of the world or the other.

III. The measure and manner of the Apostle's fond desires after these Philippian Christians: "I long after you all." Probably they were not all alike attractive either in person or character. If he had regarded them from a merely human and earthly view-point, he would have held to some and despised others; but he had risen to heavenly places in Christ, and therefore his tenderness shone on them all. A lamp lighted on the top of a pillar casts light on some objects and a shadow on others, but the sun spreads day over all. The love that is grafted into Christ is universal, like His own. There is no respect of persons with God, and none with the godly, as far as they act in accordance with their character.

W. ARNOT, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 112.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—"And this I pray: that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."

HINDRANCES to Spiritual Growth.

I. The first and greatest hindrance to our abounding more and more is this: inability to see what it is that we ought to improve, where it is that we are defective, and so long as we are content simply to look at ourselves and our doing by the light of our preconceived ideas it is easy and natural for us to be content with ourselves as we are. Our Divine Master has set before us a perfect example of what we ought to be, and He has promised to give us help and grace to enable us to tread in His steps if only we will try to do so, because, try as we will,

the copy will fall very far short of the original. The very first step, then, towards improvement is to study the life of our blessed Lord, to learn the principles by which His life was governed. Here, then, is the highest standard by which to measure ourselves. What is the motive which governs our life? Is it a desire perfectly to fulfil the will of God, or is it self in one of the many forms in which self is manifested?

II. There is another point on which we need to examine ourselves: whether we are seeking to abound more and more. Holy Scripture assures us that we are not sufficient of ourselves to obey the precepts laid down by our Lord. It is only through Christ strengthening us that we can keep free from sin. We must fulfil the conditions through which we have the promises of gaining what we need; and the very first condition to which these promises are attached is that we should have faith in what Christ has wrought in our behalf. Faith is at first weak, but by continual exercise it develops and grows until it overshadows our whole existence. The more real and true and sincere our faith is, the greater will be the harvest of good works in which we shall abound more and more; whilst, again, the more faithfully and zealously we bring forth such good works, the brighter and deeper and clearer will be our faith: the one will react upon the other; each will minister to the other's growth.

DEAN GREGORY, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 321.

CHRISTIAN Love Abounding.

The reference in our text is not primarily to love towards the Apostle himself, as some have supposed, nor yet love towards God in Christ—although this is the spring from which all true Christian love flows—but to love towards others, especially to them who are of the household of faith.

I. Let us consider the characteristics of this Christian love, which has proved in the world and in many a Church and home the mightiest spiritual force on earth. (1) One of the first things which distinguish it from other kinds of love is its absolute unselfishness. Selfishness, whether in the nation or the individual, leads to sin, and is the chief antagonist of the love which seeketh not her own, and doth not behave herself unseemly, which is inculcated in our text. (2) Again, the love spoken of here is opposed to all that is impure and unspiritual. Instead of devoting itself only to those who are attractive or winsome, it goes down to the degraded; it surrounds them with a halo of beauty, as being those for whom Christ Jesus died,

and it is not satisfied until it can lift them upward and heavenward, and make them more worthy of being loved than they are. (3) Again, this love is distinctively Christian. It is not ours by nature, for none of us loves the unattractive from instinct; but it is generated in us when the love of Christ is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. It is, in fact, a continual manifestation of Christ's love to the world, which led Him to die for us "while we were yet sinners."

II. Consider two or three facts which make it necessary that such love should abound. (1) Such abounding love is necessary if we would do Christian work for others steadfastly and earnestly. (2) Besides being a stimulus to service, abounding love is necessary to us when we have to bear the infirmities of others.

A. ROWLAND, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 181.

Chap. i., ver. 9.—"And this I pray: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge."

I. HERE we see, first, what St. Paul takes for granted as the underlying substance, as the raw material, of Divine life in the soul of man. Whenever in his writings knowledge and love are put in competition with each other, the precedence is assigned to love. For, as compared with knowledge, love is intrinsically a stronger thing, and it is worth more practically. To be knit to God by love is better, religiously speaking, than to speculate about Him, however rightly, as an abstract Being. To enwrap other men in the flame of enthusiasm for private or for public virtue is better than to analyse in the solitude of a study rival systems of ethical, or social, or political truth. Each has its place, but love comes first.

II. But St. Paul would have this love abound in knowledge. The knowledge of which he is thinking is doubtless primarily religious knowledge. The higher knowledge—ἐπίγνωσις is the word, not mere γνῶσις—is what he prays for as the outgrowth of learning. There is a period in the growth of love when such knowledge is imperatively required. In its earlier stages the loving soul lives only in the light and warmth of its object; it sees him, as it were, in a blaze of glory; it rejoices to be before him, to be beneath him, to be close to him; it asks no questions; it has no heart for scrutiny; it only loves. But, from the nature of the case, this period comes to an end, not because love becomes cold, but because it becomes exacting. If the great Apostle had been among us now, he would not have

ceased to offer this prayer. How much love, how much moral power, is wasted among us Englishmen only through ignorance. Look at the jealousy of science among us religious people—I mean jealousy of scientific fact; there are plenty of reasons for keeping clear of mere scientific hypotheses when science is waiting in God's good time to echo the words of religion. Look at the jealousy of beauty, which is lashing the well-meaning fanaticism of the country against disinterested efforts to improve the efficiency and tone of public worship. We need to pray this prayer more heartily than ever: that our love may increase in knowledge.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 321.

REFERENCES: i. 9.—Pearson, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 317; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 13; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 222. i. 9, 10.—T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 208.

Chap. i., vers. 9-11.

IN one word, the Apostle prayed that the Philippians might grow.

I. True love is intelligent. We are to love God with all our mind.

II. The Apostle prays for an enlargement and quickening of the discriminating faculty: that the Philippians might distinguish between things that differ, and that so distinguishing they might choose the right.

III. The Apostle, beginning at the centre, finds his way to the circumference; beginning with the spiritual, he culminates in the practical. The doctrines acknowledged in this prayer are (1) that Christian life is progressive; (2) that God is ready to co-operate with His people for their moral enrichment; (3) that the entire Christian manhood is to bear fruit—being filled.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 181.

REFERENCES: i. 10.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Sunday Sermonettes for a Year*, p. 206; E. Garbett, *Experiences of the Inner Life*, p. 159; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 81; J. Aldis, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 129; D. G. Watt, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvi., p. 196; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; F. D. Maurice, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 67.

Chap. i., vers. 12-14.

CIRCUMSTANCES the most untoward may in reality be advancing the Divine kingdom among men.

I. God's providence is not to be interpreted in fragments.

II. The moral is higher than the personal; Paul is in prison, but the Gospel is free.

III. The bonds of one man may give inspiration to the liberty of another.

IV. The spread of the Gospel depends upon no one man.

V. Even the afflicted Christian has a mission.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 182.

REFERENCES: i. 12-20.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 221. i. 12-26.—J. J. Goadby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 216. i. 13, 14.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. i., p. 216.

Chap. i., vers. 15-18.

I. DIVERSE developments of human disposition.

II. The possibility of doing a good deed through a bad motive.

III. The impossibility of entirely concealing motive.

IV. The actions of self-seekers turned into the good man's source of joy.

V. Man is never so diabolised as when making a good cause the means of grieving and tormenting the Church.

VI. The mere fact that a man preaches Christ is not a proof of his personal salvation.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 182.

REFERENCE: i. 15-18.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 108.

Chap. i., ver. 18.—**"What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice."**

CHRIST Preached in any Way a Cause of Joy.

We see here a great law of Christ's providence over His Church. He furthers His own ends, not by affirmations only, but by negations: by faith and by unbelief; by truth and by heresy; by unity and by schism. It is a transcendent and intricate mystery, far beyond our intelligence. All things conspire to His purpose, and His will ruleth over all, not, it may be, to the purpose we imagine for Him, nor to our idea of His will, but to His own not as yet revealed. Would St. Paul have rejoiced, had he lived in our day, that, although perfect unity in truth and love were impossible, yet every way Christ is preached? Would the publication of truth even in contention, strife, rivalry, and pretence have given him cause of joy? Would he have said, Rather so than not at

all; let Christ's name become gainsaid rather than buried in silence? I think he would—

I. Because the name of Christ reveals the love of God. The mere knowledge that God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,—the mere publication and proclaiming of this great fact, without Church or sacraments, without creeds or Scriptures, is a supernatural gift of truth revealing the love of God. And this is an inestimable advance beyond the state of man without this knowledge. Any light is better than darkness, any food than famine, even crumbs of bread which come down from heaven than the husks of this fallen earth.

II. The preaching of Christ even in the most imperfect form is a witness against the sin of the world. And what are these two great truths, the love of God and the sin of the world, but the two poles on which all our salvation turns? The mere sound of the name "Saviour," "Redeemer," "Ransom," and "Sacrifice," is a testimony against the natural conscience. The powers of truth are not bound; they, like the presence of God and the nature of man, are universal. Wheresoever they alight, as seeds wafted by the winds, or by the sweep of tides, or by the flight of birds, though not sown in order nor by the ministry of man, they germinate.

III. The preaching of Christ brings men under the law of responsibility; it reveals the four last things: death, judgment, hell, and heaven; it testifies to the commandments of God, and the law of charity, and the need of holiness. And all these things, addressed to the conscience of man, produce their own response of fear, hope, obedience. What is the ripe civilisation, the fair peace, and harmonious friendship of states and kingdoms, the alliances and relations of national systems, the temperate sway of princes, the liberty of subject people, the purity of domestic obedience, but a second crop of fruits shaken from the faith of Christ, as from the fig-tree in its later season?

All that has been said rests on two undeniable truths: (1) first, that all truth has life in it to those whose heart is right with God; (2) that the duty of believing the whole and perfect truth is absolutely binding on pain of sin to all who know it.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iv., p. 60.

REFERENCES: i. 18.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 370; T. Wallace, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. x., p. 206

Chap. i., ver. 19.—"For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ."

I. Mark the confidence of the declaration, "I *know*." Righteousness is a prophetic power.

II. Mark the ground of this confidence. The Apostle's joy does not arise from the fact that certain persons preached, but from the higher fact that Christ was preached.

III. The extension of the truth is the best guarantee of personal happiness.

IV. The Gospel has everything to hope from being allowed to reveal its own credentials.

V. The greatest man in the Church may be served by the supplication of the good.

Parker, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 207.

References: i. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1139; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 85.

Chap. i., ver. 20.—"Christ shall be magnified in my body."

I. We all see in some points what St. Paul must have meant by this expression. It was a thought frequently present to him. If he lives, if his earthly life is protracted through toils so constant and sufferings so intense, this shows the supporting hand of the risen, the immortal, Saviour. There must be some marvellous power out of and above him, or he must long ago have sunk under such pressure; there must be One above, whose grace is sufficient for him: sufficient to keep him meek under provocation, courageous under intimidation, and steadfast in the face of danger. Christ is thus magnified (not made great, but shown to be great) in his body by life. And if death comes, then Christ, who makes him willing to die for Him, Christ, who gives him grace, courage, and constancy to die for Him, shall be magnified in him still, magnified in his body, as by life, so by death.

II. Such was the meaning of the words before us for St. Paul himself. Have they any meaning for us? It is in the power of a Christian, so the words import, to magnify Christ; that is, to show the greatness of Christ in his body. Temperance, purity, activity—by these we may magnify Him. And there are yet two ways besides these more common ones. (1) One of these is suffering. Christ is dishonoured by fretfulness, by repining, by dwelling upon past happiness, by a dejection which refuses to be comforted; He is magnified by a manly and Christian composure, by a resignation gradually brightening

into cheerfulness, by a courageous hope, and by a steadfast expectation. (2) And then at last death has to be borne. It is a secret thing, a thing which no man knows save by once for all passing through it himself. When a man can really find peace on his deathbed from a tortured body and an agitated mind in the long-tried support and comfort of a Saviour who died for him and rose again, he pays a tribute to His greatness, and to His truth, and to His character at once the noblest and the best. "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 41.

REFERENCES: i. 20.—A. J. Bamford, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 102.

Chap. i., vers. 20, 21.

I. "EXPECTATION" and "hope"—these are words which connect the heart with the future.

II. No power can so light up the future and throw over it the hues of immortal beauty as childlike trust in God.

III. The man who is living without expectation and hope is living only half a life, but the man who is living on false expectations and false hopes is wasting life.

IV. It is right that the body should be turned to moral account.

V. The possibility of being ready either for earthly or heavenly life.

VI. Identification with Christ is the secret of such readiness.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 207.

Chap. i., ver. 21.—"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I. "To me to live is Christ." The connection in which these words stand seems to give us their primary meaning. The business of my life is Christ; my energy, my activity, my occupation, my interest, is all Christ. St. Paul regarded everything that he had to do, and he regarded everything that befell him, only in relation to, in its bearing upon, Christ. The words describe a condition widely different from that of most of us. Before St. Paul could say that his outward life was Christ, he must have been able to say it of his inward life. Before Christ can be to any one his object, his business, his work, in life, He must first be his trust and his hope, his known and tried refuge from guilt, from fear, from restlessness, from sin. A man must

have Christ for the life of his soul before he can have Christ for the life of his life. Small as is the regard paid to Christ in our life, is there not less of regard for Him in our souls?

II. To St. Paul—and in this respect St. Paul was but an example for the humblest Christian—to St. Paul, inwardly first and then outwardly, in soul first and then in action, *to live was Christ.* And therefore, therefore only, was he able to add in truth and soberness, And to me to die is gain. Painful in itself and to all of us, painful in his case even beyond ours—for he when he wrote expected life to be closed—and it was closed a few years later—by a death of martyrdom—yet the death consummated and endured was a gain to him even in comparison with a Christian's life. Here to live was Christ; but even beyond that there was a blessedness into which only death could usher him. *To have died is gain.* If we would die the Christian's death, we must live the Christian's life; if we would find it a gain to have died, we must have found it to us Christ to live.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 54.

I. "To me to live is Christ." A bold figure, showing, for one thing, the rapid action of the Apostle's mind; a haste to express the main idea; an impatience, as it were, of the immediate and explanatory expressions. For another thing, it shows the mighty magnitude of the object in his esteem. He regarded all the grand truths and interests of religion as centring in Him, comprehended in Him, insomuch that His very name might stand equivalent to them all. How absurd, if He were not infinitely higher, greater, than a man, a prophet. Think how it would have sounded if, for instance, Elijah, the zealous and heroic advocate of the Old Testament law, when he at one time desired to die rather than live, had recovered to the consideration of his important mission and said, "To me to live is Moses."

II. "To me to live is Christ." His chief and immediate reference was to the important service which his prolonged life and apostleship would render to the Christian cause, especially to the Christian converts to whom he was writing; but he would include the happiness which he would the while enjoy himself, the communion with Christ to which he and all the apostles so often refer with great emphasis of delight, the hope, the assured prospect, of all that was in futurity for himself and for the world. Yet, with this consummation of animating interests in his soul, the happiest man probably on the whole face of the

earth, he deliberately judged that to depart and be with Christ would as to himself be far better. The Apostle was of the highest order of Christians. But to every real Christian to die is gain. The sensible loss of all the evils of this present state will of itself be an immense gain. How mighty the duty, how transcendent the interest, of directing our utmost energy to the object that death may be gain.

J. FOSTER, *Lectures*, vol. ii., p. 252.

Chap. i., ver. 21.—"For to me to live is Christ."

I. THIS canon rules the thought; the intellectual life is His. All the thinking a man goes through, all the philosophy he may excogitate, must come under this law of Christ-life. Be it well understood, however, that this is not to impair intellectual freedom. Gold dust is scattered through all the intellectual world, and he who seeks will find. But here is the point: something is found already which will never be lost; something is revealed never to be withdrawn. Christianity is a positive something which to every one that receives it takes firm abiding-place at the centre of his life, and puts itself of necessity and immediately into regulating, vitalising relation with all his intellectual findings. No one point of knowledge, great or small, can be the same to him whose life is in Christ which it would be if that were not true.

II. Take life as sentiment, and again this canon will cover it to a Christian. "To me to live is Christ." How shall we keep the poetry in our life? How shall we dignify the struggle for daily bread? How shall we live in this world as in God's garden still, although many a thorn and many a thistle grow in it, and the workers are weary, and the mourners weep? How? I know but one way. There is a name which you can keep in your heart and talk of or whisper in your journey through the days, and that will do it. "For me life is Christ."

III. Again, take life as force, active moral force—and the text covers it all: "Be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

IV. Finally, take life as hope, aspiration, destiny; as an unquenchable impulse towards the future; as an instinctive yearning towards immortality. Surely here with emphasis we may say, "For us to live is Christ." We live in Him, and because He lives we shall live also. He liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore. "Fear not"; He has the keys of death and Hades now, and death is to His followers but

an hour of sleep, and the grave but the place of warrior's rest, until the morning trumpet shall sound to gather the hosts for battle no more, but for triumphal entrance into the regal city, whose Builder and Maker is God.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 153.

I. LOOK at the motive and mainspring of St. Paul's life. For him to live was Christ. Selfishness grew weak; selfishness dropped off as the viper that he shook from his hand at Melita; it died out; it was starved out; it had nothing to subsist on. That is the way to kill selfishness: starve it out. Health, honour, fame, everything that could encourage it, he abandoned. There was a complete self-renunciation in that man's career; there was a complete, unreserved consecration to Christ. With Paul, selfishness being dead, the greatest torment of life was taken away. Paul grew happy in conquering himself; Paul was kept happy in serving Jesus.

II. Consider, too, how this motive of devotion to Christ ennobled him. A man is measured by his motives. A lofty aim makes a lofty career in a dungeon or a hovel; a low aim makes a man grovel in a palace or a senate-house. Any man that sets before himself a motive lower than Christ, a motive no higher than self-indulgence and self-seeking, dooms himself at starting. He cannot know life's highest joy; he cannot realise life's noblest purpose; he cannot taste life's sweetest blessings; he cannot please God; life becomes a mockery, and very soon a weariness too heavy to be borne. St. Paul's life was too elevating, too much in fellowship with Christ, for him ever to grow weary of it. Life is glorious, it is exhilarating, sublime, transcendent, when it shines with Christ as a summer morning shines with sunlight; but a life that never hath Christ in it had better never have been.

T. L. CUYLER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 1.

THE Ideal of the Christian Life.

Living in Christ and for Christ is the only life of satisfaction and enjoyment. "All others," says Gregory Nazianzen, "are like well-painted ships; but he who sets sail for the harbour of blessedness needs a well-compacted ship."

I. The text is one of those striking forms of transcendental expression in which the writings of the Apostle Paul abound. It is in the nature of all high emotion that it is dissatisfied with all cold and formal utterance; it does not so much seek as

demand to use words of accumulative force. How different are men's estimates of Christ. To some He is a life-power; to some He is merely a dumb, marble, ideal beauty.

II. What is your life? It is even that which is your strongest love. It has been often said—and I believe it heartily—that we do not live indeed until we love in real earnest; and the greater, the nobler, our love, the greater and the nobler will be the life born from it. And hence there are many persons who have lived long in the world, but they have never begun to live indeed. We do not know what we are capable of till something crosses our path and says, "Live for me."

III. It will be found at last that all life ever known on earth was poor compared to those exalted states in which the blessed ones who have lived for God have moved. If the work of life is to be estimated by the grandeur of its ideals, then what conceptions have ever crossed the most inspired spirits compared to those which have been stirred by the life of Christ?

IV. For me to live is (1) faith in Christ; (2) meditation on Christ; (3) action for Christ; (4) hope in Christ. There is no prospect of time He does not illuminate; there is no possibility of eternal blessedness of which He is not the centre. In the heart of all future Christian experience, in the glory of all future advanced societies and kingdoms, in all the eye of the loftiest poet can see, the heart of the profoundest believer can reach out to—in all "to live is Christ."

E. Paxton Hood, *Sermons*, p. 134.

References: i. 21.—J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, p. 169; Isaac, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 395; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 7th series, p. 1; A. Murray, *The Fruits of the Spirit*, p. 360; Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iii., No. 146; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 7; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons to English Congregations in India*, p. 135; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 41; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. vi., p. 26; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 254; J. W. Burn, *Ibid.*, vol. xxiv., p. 165; Laidlaw, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxii., p. 235; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. i., p. 267; vol. ii., p. 423; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 13; vol. x., p. 127.

Chap. i., vers. 21-24.

The Fruit of Labour.

Such words can never lose their power. They come down to us from a purer air; yet the voice is human, and is audible to all who feel. They sum up the constant tenor of a life which, like all great lives, is able at once to shame us and to inspire, and also to teach a lesson which may be applied to the most various conditions of human existence.

I. Let us try to think of the fact which the words imply. Think of this, and then think of the petty rivalries, the mean pleasures, the waste of power, the frivolous talk, the ungenerous feeling, the mean policy, the mere idle vacancy, which beset our common life; and, however little you may hope to pass at once from this to that, you cannot but feel the weight of the rebuke. Can we realise, have we ever sought to realise, the certainty of our own death? How then shall we compare our lives to his who looked with open face beyond the grave, desiring to depart, and yet, for the sake of others, was content to live?

II. Note the general lesson which may be drawn from the text. The Christian ideal of blessedness has two aspects, which both meet in Christ: one inward and upward, looking towards communion with God, and one outward and around, looking towards our brethren and mankind, especially towards the weaker brethren, those little ones for whom Christ died. To act in the present, to live for others, to redeem the time, to use all means for bettering the physical and social, as well as the moral and spiritual, condition of mankind—these, it need hardly be said, are precepts in full accordance with Christianity. But the thought of another life, for which this is the seed-time and preparation, in which some obstacles that check the flow of goodness here will be removed, and whatever we have sown of righteousness will bear fruit a thousandfold—this, instead of being out of harmony with these duties, is the greatest of all incentives to them.

L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 162.

Reference: i. 21-24.—J. Clifford, *The Dawn of Manhood*, p. 185.

Chap. i., vers. 21-26.

There is a triple movement of thought and feeling in these words.

I. There is the strong absorbing devotion which a man has to Christ. Here we get the grand noble simplicity and unity or continuity of life and death with a devout man thinking about himself. To *me*, he says—and the position of the word in the sentence shows the emphasis which is to be put upon it—To me—not merely in my judgment, but in my case, so far as *I* personally am concerned—to me the whole mystery and perplexity comes down into two clauses with four words in each: "To live is Christ; to die is gain." The outward life is what he is talking about, obviously from the antithesis; and in the latter clause what he says is not that the act of dying is gain, but (as the form of

words in the Greek seems to show) that to be dead is gain. Like everybody else, he shrank from the act. No man ever said that the act and article of dissolution was anything but a pain and a horror and a terror; it was not that that he said was an advance, but it was the thing beyond. To die, that is loss; but to be dead, that is gain. (1) Look at the noble theory of life, the grand simplicity and breadth, that there is in these words. (2) Contrast the blessed simplicity, the freedom, the power, that there is in such a life as that, with the misery that comes into all lives that have a lower aim and a less profound source.

II. Note the hesitation that arises in Paul's mind from the contemplation of life as a field for work. The text suggests the idea of a man hedged up between two walls and not knowing how to turn.

III. Notice the calm beautiful solution of the question—in an equipoise of hesitation, something pulling two ways, and so the rest of equal forces acting—notice the calm solution, the peaceful acquiescence, "I know I shall abide and continue with you all." Then the innate delicacy of the man comes out in the way in which he phrases his perception of the necessity there is for his stopping. He sinks self and represents himself as sharing his brethren's gladness. The true attitude is neither desire, nor shrinking, nor hesitation, but a calm taking what God wills about the matter.

A. MACLAREN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 33.

Chap. i., vers. 22-25.

I. IN the text St. Paul appears to weigh his life against departing and being with Christ. We must not suppose him to be speaking of his own case only, as an exceptional case, one of those grievously afflicted lives which make men desire death merely as a termination of their earthly sufferings; but we must rather understand him as declaring that to depart and be with Christ is absolutely far better than life here, better for all, a higher state of being, an existence of greater blessing. And it is evident upon what ground St. Paul declares this preference: the departing is not a mere departing, but it is a departing to be with Christ. The magnification of Christ was the one great end of the Apostle's life: to realise Christ's love, to conform himself to Christ's image, to exhibit to mankind, not by word only, but by life and example, a picture of the life of Christ—this was the thing for which the Apostle strove; and undoubtedly the light which ever shone upon his faith was this: the entire belief

that one day he should be with Christ and see Him as He is. If in this life he had only a dim, faint view of Christ, and yet found even that unspeakably brighter and better than anything else which he could see in this world, what wonder if he desired that closer communion with his Lord which he believed would be granted to him when he had put aside the burden of the flesh?

II. We are all placed here in God's world, endowed with various powers and different talents; here we are to remain for some few years, and then all to pass away. Fifty years—what is it in the history of the world? and yet in even fifty years how many of us will still remain in this life? The question then forces itself upon us as reasonable creatures, What are we put here for, and why should we desire to remain? The answer is simple: We are placed here to work out our own salvation and for the benefit each of the other. It need not distress any one to find that St. Paul's language is out of his reach; he had much better honestly confess that it is so, than pretend that it is not; but if a man desire this life, at least let him desire it for some good end. Let him take a deep, sober view of his mission in the world, for every one is *sent* for an important end; every one of us has his work and his Master, who will demand an account of it. We are all successors of St. Paul in this respect, and that which formed to him the principal chain of life ought to occupy a similar position in our minds to that which it did in his.

BISHOP HARVEY GOODWIN, *Parish Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 245.

Chap. i., vers. 22-26.

I. THE personal weighed with the public, or the difficulties of the veteran philanthropist.

II. Man's sublimest reason for not wishing immediate translation to glory is that he may be of spiritual service to the world.

III. The next best condition to that of being with Christ in heaven is to be working for Christ's people on earth.

IV. There is only one world in which you can serve man evangelically; do not be in indecent haste to escape the opportunity.

V. God never leaves the earth entirely destitute of great men.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 208.

Chap. i., ver. 23.—"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better."

THE Believer's Better Portion.

I. Paganism had cold comfort for its children. It is the religion of the Lord Jesus which can cheer and satisfy the soul. Our Divine Redeemer having "overcome death" and opened unto us the kingdom of heaven, the reign of the terrible destroyer, death, is broken, and his power over our mortal bodies is only for a brief season.

II. Well may we envy the portion of those who, "having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labours." So long as we are engaged in this warfare, we are exposed to the snares of the destroyer, and great must be the peace of having laid aside this mystery of probation.

J. N. NORTON, *Golden Truths*, p. 449.

THE Blessedness of Death.

Why should departure out of this life be an object of desire to a Christian?

I. First, because it is a full release from this evil world. There is something very expressive in the word we here render by "depart." It means the being set free after the breaking up of some long restraint, or the unyoking of the oxen wearied with the plough, or the weighing again of our anchors for a homeward voyage. On every side its associations are full of peace and rest. What can better express the passage of Christ's servants from this tumultuous and weary world? So long as we are in this warfare, we must be open to the shafts of evil, and who would not desire a shelter where no arrows can reach us any more? What must be the peace of having put off this mystery of probation, when the struggle and the strife shall be over, and breathless, panting hope, dashed by ten thousand fears, shall be changed into a certainty of peace, into a foretaste of our crown! This one thought alone is enough to make death blessed. Well may evangelists say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," and souls already martyred, like St. Paul, desire to depart. Even to us it may be permitted to feel our hearts beat thick with hopeful and longing fear when we wait for the voice that shall say to the least of penitents, "Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away, for lo! the winter is past; the rain is over and gone." Come to Me from Lebanon; look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, unto the everlasting hills and to the eternal years.

II. Thus far we have spoken of the desire to depart, which springs from a longing to be set free from sorrow and an evil world, from the temptations and burdens of mortality which weigh upon the soul. But these are the nether, and not the upper, springs of such desires. St. Paul longed for the spiritual body, raised in power and incorruption at the day of Christ, and meanwhile for that personal perfection in measure and foretaste which is prepared for those who die in the Lord and await His coming. Surely of all earthly sorrows sin is the sharpest. The heaviest of all burdens is the bondage of a will which makes God's service a weary task, and our homage of love a cold observance.

III. And this leads to another reason why to depart is blessed. It unites us for ever to the new creation of God. What is this new creation but the new heavens and the new earth, in which are gathered the whole order and lineage of the second Adam, all saints, from Abel the just, of all ages and times, in the twilight and the dayspring, in the morning and the noontide of grace, all made perfect, whether on earth or in rest, by the omnipotence of love? This is our true home, where all our reason, all our desires, all our sympathies, and all our love have their perfect sphere and their full repose.

IV. "To be with Christ." This is the true foundation of heavenly joy. To be with Him; to see His face; to follow Him whithersoever He goeth; to be conscious of His eye; to hear, it may be, His words of love; to see the gathered fruit of His Passion in the glory of His elect—what, if not this, is heaven? It is only our dull love of this world, or our blindness of heart, or, alas! our consciousness of penetrating guilt, which makes this desire of saints a thought of fear to us. But for this, how blessed to go to dwell with Him for ever!

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 370.

REFERENCES: i. 23.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. v., No. 274; vol. xix., No. 1136.

Chap. i., vers. 23, 24.

CONSIDER—

I. The two desires. (1) To depart and be with Christ. This desire is composed of two parts: a vestibule, somewhat dark and forbidding, through which the pilgrim must pass, and a temple, unspeakably glorious, to which it leads the pilgrim as his eternal home. (2) To abide in the flesh. It is a natural and lawful desire. God has placed us here; He has visited us here; He has given us something to enjoy and something to do

here. He expects us to value what He has bestowed. Jesus, in His prayer to the Father for those whom He has redeemed, puts in a specific caveat: "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world." What Christ did not desire for Christians, they should not desire for themselves. Paul, even when he was ripe for glory, positively desired to abide in the flesh; they are the healthiest Christians who in this matter tread in his track.

II. A Christian balanced evenly between these two desires. The gain which it promised to himself made the prospect of departure welcome; the opportunity of doing good to others reconciled him to longer life on earth. These two desires go to constitute the spiritual man; these are the right and left sides of the new creature in Christ.

III. Practical lessons. (1) This one text is sufficient to destroy the whole value of Romish prayer to departed saints. (2) The chief use of a Christian in the world is to do good. (3) You cannot be effectively useful to those who are in need on earth unless you hold by faith and hope to Christ on high. (4) Living hope of going to be with Christ is the only anodyne which has power to neutralise the pain of parting with those who are dear to us in the body.

W. ARNOT, *Roots and Fruits*, p. 212.

ST. PAUL in Rome.

I. It was not weariness of life, not the longing to escape from that close network which he had so sedulously woven round himself, that made the thought of death, not only painless, but welcome, to St. Paul; it was only the prospect of meeting Christ, of seeing Him as He is, of spending the future in His immediate presence and in unbroken converse with Him. To St. Paul this meeting appeared to be the instantaneous sequel of death, even while out of the body and before the great day. Such a condition of rest, and yet of conscious spiritual energy, is that which human reason and analogy suggest to us as far as they can suggest anything on a subject so mysterious. It is evident that the rest to St. Paul is not a complete torpor of the soul's consciousness. He is not looking forward to a dreamless slumber; he is thinking of such a meeting and communion as he can realise and profoundly enjoy.

II. Very remarkable it is to note the strength of this desire in the one Apostle who had seen the least of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Had he known the most intimate communion with

Jesus in the past, he could not have anticipated with more fervent longing the joy of meeting Christ hereafter.

III. Notice how St. Paul's words tell against the efficacy of prayers to departed saints. If a saint can work more effectually in heaven for others than here, then St. Paul was mistaken, and his departure would have been a clear gain to the converts and the Church at large. The value of life, then, in the eyes of the true Christian, lies in the opportunity it gives of serving others. It is worth while to abide in the flesh; it is our duty to control even so pure a desire as to wish to depart and be with Christ for the sake of those to whose higher needs and true happiness God enables us to minister.

R. DUCKWORTH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 242.

THE Attractions of Heaven.

I. The *place* heaven has its attractions. It is paradise regained. Beauty smiles there; plenty laughs there; the blessing of God is enthroned there.

II. There are attractions in the heavenly *state*. It is a sorrowless, and curseless, and deathless state.

III. "Having a desire to depart," that is, to depart to the realisation of our highest hopes. Is our treasure, like that of Paul, in heaven?

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 67.

Chap. i., ver. 27.—"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ."

IT is plain that every precept of holy living might be brought under this comprehensive charge. Let us narrow the compass of the exhortation. Let us say, Live inwardly and live outwardly as citizens of that kingdom which the Gospel has revealed.

I. How large a part of life is lived wholly within public life, social life, family life; these do not exhaust the whole being even in those who are most busy, most sociable, or most domestic. Within and beside all these there is for all of us a life yet more real, yet more important; and the danger of all these other kinds of life is lest they should obscure or paralyse or stifle this. It is for our soul's sake, for our eternal welfare's sake, that we must watch and pray against this danger. As in some senses we all have a secret life, which we cannot part with nor make public even if we would, so it is our great business to attend to this secret life, to regulate and cultivate it, in such

a way that it may become, as it is here expressed, worthy of the Gospel. We ought to be living our citizenship inwardly towards Christ, our Lord and King. The state of our mind towards Him personally ought to be that which suits and is consistent with our relation to Him as His subjects.

II. And then that which is within will shine through into that which is without also. He whose inner life is that of one whom Christ has saved will be living outwardly also as a citizen of the kingdom not of this world; his aims and motives will be higher than those of men who know not God; he will not be a worldly man; he will not be a vain man; he will declare plainly by his acts that he is one who seeks a country.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 73.

REFERENCES: i. 27.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xi., No. 640; F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvii., p. 209; J. R. Woodford, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 161; W. J. Woods, *Ibid.*, vol. xxxvi., p. 280; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iv., p. 345; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 145; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 353; *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 113. i. 27, 28.—*Homilist*, vol. v., p. 189; A. Maclaren, *The Secret of Power*, p. 237.

Chap. i., vers. 27-30.

THIS is a call—

I. To holiness. There is but one ideal life in the Church. In all our growing and striving Christ Himself is to us, and His grace is, all-sufficient.

II. To unanimity. Monotony is not what is meant by unanimity. We are one in our love and service of Christ.

III. To courage. Timidity is an impediment on the path of moral progress; it arises from distrust of God. "Straight on," is God's command, and He will frighten the lions from before your feet.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 210.

REFERENCES: i. 27-30.—J. J. Goadby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 293; J. P. Gledstone, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 59.

Chap. i., ver. 29.—"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake."

THE Sacrifice of the Redeemed.

I. Christ's sacrifice is no far-away fact, to be shown and gazed upon; it draws us also unto itself. For consider what exactly it was. Where does its vicarious efficacy for us lie? Surely in this: that Christ made His offering out of our very flesh. He laid hold of no foreign thing to offer; He looked not elsewhere

for a gift. He looked at this world we live in; He took of its substance for His gift; He laid hold of its present nature, and offered that. Forasmuch as the children partook of flesh and blood, Christ partook of the same. As He found it, so He took it; just it, and no other; this, just this, is that in which He would accomplish His priestly work. But these are the very conditions in which we to this day live. That flesh which He took we still wear; still it is full charged with ache and torment; still it wastes and sickens. We then hold in our hands the very gift which Christ, our Master, offered. It was just these human sorrows that He turned into sacraments of allegiance. Are we blinded to our opportunities by the fact that they fall upon us by natural laws, or that they seem entirely accidental, or that they are brought upon us unjustly by wicked hands?

II. But consider the offering of Christ. What can possibly be more unlike a pleasing sacrifice to God than His death? What sign of its being a High-priest's offering broke through the shadow of this world's darkness? It differed in no degree whatever from any common disaster that happens to us. It came upon Him by simple natural means; it looked to the outsider as a most cruel and unfortunate and bloody accident. He offered then, and saved by offering, just that human life which still is ours to-day; and if so, His sacrifice is not only a vicarious act, but a revelation of the true use to which we may put this very world in which we stand, a revelation of the manner by which even it, with all its confusions, and disappointments, and sickness, and weariness, and anguish, and death, may be justified, may be hallowed, may be transformed into the fuel of the one sacrifice which alone can reconcile the world to God. We are drawn into the circle in which Christ's eternal energies work; the love of Christ lays hands upon us and constrains us; we, as we are uplifted by the prayer of His Passion, we, too, recover our priesthood; we may lift the offering of this our flesh to God, since that day when Christ died in the likeness of our flesh and sanctified it to become an offering to God. We may do it now, though we are severed from that great day by eighteen hundred long and weary years, for still to-day Christ, the ever-living Priest, pleads within that holy place, into which He has passed before us, that holy blood, once poured out in love for us, which makes Him still bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh; and still to-day, as the Father looks upon that blood, there breaks from His eyes ever and again the splendour of an unappeasable and exhaustless love, which hastens from afar

to greet our poor and pitiful gift of ourselves to Him, kissing us and rejoicing, as God, the mighty Forgiver, can alone rejoice, that this His Son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.

H. SCOTT HOLLAND, *Logic and Life*, p. 133.

REFERENCE: i.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 24.

Chap. ii., ver. 1.—"If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies——"

Two Incitements to Love.

I. It is tenderness and compassion which St. Paul wants the Philippians to practise, and he endeavours to win them to the practice by the recognition and proclamation of the tenderness and compassion that were already theirs. Listen, he says—listen to the love-beatings within you, and be loving. Lo, you carry within you a proud and brotherly sensibility; expand and apply it. He would draw them on to be kinder than they are by setting before them the kindliness they feel. And this is the best way of helping and persuading men to improve, the best way in which to try and lead them from lower things to higher, from unworthy to worthier conduct, namely by fastening upon what they are, in the midst of their faultiness, that is good and beautiful, upon what they have of good and beautiful motions in their breasts, by touching these, and calling their attention to them, and demanding that they should be cultivated and followed.

II. "If there be any consolation in Christ." That there is is true enough. How many have found, and are daily finding, it in Him. But the true rendering of the word is "exhortation." When, in enjoining on the Philippians to cultivate love, the Apostle points them to Christ, it would be surely, not comfort which he meant them to find in Him, but exhortation—exhortation to the love to which he was so anxious to lead them. And the figure of Jesus in the midst of the ages—is it not just this: a perpetual exhortation to men to be a little better than they are, to be less worldly, less grovelling, less selfish, to rise from their low levels to higher ways, with a nobler and purer spirit? And have we not met with persons, too, who in their silent examples, in their beautiful lives, in the spirit that breathed from them, have been full of exhortation to us, in the presence of whose pureness and earnestness, in witnessing whose deeds, we have felt ourselves

called to heights above us, have seen with a touch of shame the comparative poorness of what we were and with a sigh of wishfulness the truer thing that we might be? And is not Christ preeminently such a Person? Whenever we meet Him in thoughtful pauses by the way, in moments of quiet meditation over the Gospel page, does He not act on us thus, with rufflings of self-discontent, with a sense of being coarser and earthlier than we ought to be? He stands out an angel in the sun, for ever above us all, yet for ever moving upon and affecting us all: painted for ever upon the eye of the world, we cannot help aspiring and endeavouring the more for the grandeur of His face; it disturbs us in our worldliness and selfishness, and is always exhorting us against them, is always appealing to us to rise toward nobler things.

S. A. TIPPLE, *Sunday Mornings at Norwood*, p. 197.

REFERENCES: ii. 1.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vii., No. 348. ii. 1-4.—J. J. Goadby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xv., p. 293.

Chap. ii., vers. 1-11.

I. "IF" is not in this case a sign of doubt or hesitation, but, on the contrary, a sign of the most assured certainty. As employed by Paul, it is equivalent to "If there is any water in the sea," or "If there is any light in the sun."

II. This appeal of the Apostle is a burst of tenderness. Affection delights in repetition; love amplifies its expressions to the utmost.

III. Paul having laid his basis in the very heart of Christ, makes an appeal: "Fulfil ye my joy." It is right to interject one's personality as an element in an argument for brotherhood and consolation in the Church.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 211.

REFERENCES: ii. 1-11.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 99; Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 50. ii. 1-14.—*Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 350.

Chap. ii., ver. 2.—"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded."

I. *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be of one mind.* St. Paul's happiness was not quite complete until he could see those whom he loved—and he loved these Philippians—walking in unity. There may be unity without acquaintance, and there may be unity amidst variety. These two defects (as they might appear) are not fatal to the unity of which St. Paul speaks. These things are not the real, certainly not the most formidable, impediments

to Christian unity; its worst dangers lie nearer to us than these. St. Paul here shows us what they are. He points out what I may call the conditions of unity, and they are two: humility and unselfishness. (1) Humility. Act not, he says, on a principle of party spirit or vainglory; but in your humility count each superior to yourselves. Need I point out how inseparably connected are individual vanity and collective discord, how it is the assumption, and the pushing, and the arrogance, and the expectation of undue respect and deference, on the part of individuals, which cause at least half of those piques and misunderstandings and secret heart-burnings which run on at last into open dissensions? (2) Unselfishness. The two graces have their root in one. Look not each of you on your own things, but each of you also on the things of others. Vanity is a fruitful cause of dissension; but below vanity itself lies ever a foundation of selfishness.

II. Note the motives by which Christian unity is here recommended and enforced. I beseech you, Paul says in effect, by every comfort and by every privilege of the Gospel. If there be any such thing as consolation in Christ, if there be any such thing as comfort in love, if any such thing as a joint participation in the Holy Spirit, if any such thing as a heart of pitying compassion, then by all these things I beseech you to be of one soul and of one mind.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 87.

I. "BEING of one accord" does not always mean being of the same opinion. Of course in the main there can be no good work done unless the great verities are believed by us all. We believe the vital truths, but then there are shades of opinion about many things. I do not want to see eye to eye with every one on men or things. Variety is intended by God. There are men emphatically endowed by special gifts for mission work; some have tender sympathies, and they can be friends to the fatherless and widow; some have gifts for calling out the energies of the young.

II. There must be in this one accord subordinacy of one to the other. Everything must be subservient to great ends. There must always be the chorus-leader; you know he was called so in the Greek choruses. There must be men of the same faith, all inspired by the same Spirit. By subserviency I mean everything uniting for Christ's end. You fall into your place, and subserve the interests of the Cross.

III. In this harmony there is health. It is so in a nation. A nation is in harmony when the rich sympathise with and help the poor, and the wise help the ignorant. You may live many years, but the poor you will have always to the end of time, and men must be self-disciplined who have these blessings and seek to use them aright. A prosperous Church and nation is where there is health in the body politic.

IV. We shall thus enjoy influence. The world likes harmony; it does not know always how it is attained, but it likes it.

V. Lastly, it means *heaven.* What does heaven mean? It means rest in God. Whose mind have we? Christ's. And that is heaven begun on earth.

W. M. STATHAM, *Christian World Pulpit,* vol. xxiv., p. 397.

Chap. ii., vers. 3-5.

THE Discipline of the Christian Character.

I. The Christian character is set before us in manifold and diversified ways in the Bible. The Christian character in its completeness is the result and outgrowth of all that series of events of which the Bible is in part, but in the most important part, the record, which begins in ages back beyond our ken and which comes down even to the day which is passing. This form of human character, tending from the first to the mind of Christ and at last culminating in it in His person, and less completely in His saints after the day of Pentecost, is the character put before us in the Bible and given us to study, to learn from according to our measure, to assimilate and reproduce.

II. The foundation of the religious character of the Old and New Testaments was laid in a great idea which is brought into clear and strong distinctness in the age of the Patriarchs, in God's dealings with Abraham, in what is shown to us of the discipline and guidance under which he became the father of the faithful, the first example, that is in detail, that is of feeling and action, of the religious idea. And that idea is the singleness and individuality of the soul in its relation to the God who called it into being. If the feeling of the individual being, merged and swallowed up in the aggregate, is strong and even irresistible at times now, how much more so in the infancy of the world, when that discipline of man began which was to lead at last to the mind of Christ. And so the first work of that discipline was to enforce and impress deeply another great and paramount aspect

of man and life, another great side of the truth which should balance, correct, and complete the other. It was to teach and leave firmly planted the faith that God had His eye on each separable unit in these innumerable crowds; that each separate soul in them had its direct relations to its Maker, its course to follow for itself, its destiny to fulfil or to fail in, its special calls and gifts, according to its Master's purpose, to account for, its own separate hopes, its own separate responsibilities. In the history of Abraham, from his call to the last trial of his faith, we see that great and, as far as we are allowed to see at least in its greatness and depth, that new, lesson.

III. We live alone as much as we die alone, and we, "whose spirits live in awful singleness, each in his self-formed sphere of light or gloom," need to know that great conviction before we die. It may indeed come at any moment; in the hurry of business, in the hour of joy, in the misery of bereavement, in the flash and revelation of the beauty or the awfulness of the world, oh even in the very moment of temptation and the hour of sin, we may learn and feel the startling and essential singleness of the soul. But it will be well for us not to wait for its coming, but to seek it as the Psalmist long ago taught men to seek it: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee."

DEAN CHURCH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 104.

Chap. ii., vers. 3-5.

I. THERE are two ways of doing even the best work: through strife and through love. This was seen in the first chapter, where two classes of preachers are described.

II. Entire sympathy with Christ will always heighten man's appreciation of man.

III. Christianity is thus the only humanising and fraternising religion.

IV. Self-seeking is in utter antagonism to the spirit of Christianity.

V. Christianity never encourages a degrading view of human nature. Man is to be esteemed by man. Christians are to recognise each other's excellencies. Love's eye is quick to detect virtue in another. Up to this point Paul continues his appeal for unanimity. The spirit of this appeal is most suggestive; it is the spirit of profound and tender sympathy with Christ. Absence of union is a reflection upon the uniting force. What is the uniting force of a Christian Church? The love of

Christ. Where, then, there is disunion, it is plainly to be inferred that there is either not sufficient of this love, or that this love is unequal to the exigencies of the case. The world has a right to compare the deeds of the servant with the deeds of the Master, because the connection is moral, and consequently involves responsibility. All the practices of the Church are carried back to Christ, and He is magnified or crucified afresh according to their nature. PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 212.

Chap. ii., ver. 4.—**"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."**

COURTESY.

I. Courtesy is the expression in outward manner of deference for the most delicate susceptibilities of others. It is doubtless, on the one side, a habit; it is practised instinctively; its forms are caught by unconscious imitation; it is inherited like other habits, so that it seems sometimes a native characteristic of particular blood. On the other side, like other habits, it has been generated originally by the feelings and the will. While it is practised it reacts on the mind and heart, and fosters and keeps alive those feelings from which it sprang. If the feelings which renew and vivify it die away, it will become an empty shell or form: a part will drop in here, and a part there. The hasty observer may not detect the change. The gracious manner will remain as an ornament in the public eye; but those who know the man behind the scenes will know that even the manner is forgotten when he is most truly himself.

II. Courtesy, then, if it be a virtue of manner, is an essentially Christian virtue; that is, it rests on ideas Christian in origin: (1) first, on the universality of our relations to mankind, in the sense that all men are of one blood, one Father; (2) secondly, on the special claim of the weak upon the strong, the claim for sympathy inherent in pain, even in the little pains of injured susceptibility, the paramount claim to tenderest consideration of childhood, of the weaker sex, of the poor, of the wronged, of the dependent. Graft upon these the idea inherent in the highest types of the Christian character drawn in the New Testament, the idea of *self-respect*, pride turned inwardly as a motive and exacting standard of personal high living, and we have complete the chivalrous conception of a gentleman's courtesy. We find the best pictures of it in two characters put before us in the New Testament: (*a*) in the writings of St. Paul; (*b*) in the acts and words of One greater than St. Paul.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 82.

CHRISTIAN Self-sacrifice.

I. Christian self-sacrifice necessarily takes two forms, for, on the one hand, there is a self-sacrifice for the sake of ourselves, as it were for our own self-discipline; there is a self-sacrifice which gives up a great deal which otherwise we might reasonably keep in order that we may more entirely devote our whole souls to God; there is a self-sacrifice the purpose of which is closer communion, the purpose of which is to live in our thoughts and in the impulses and emotions of our hearts more entirely in the Lord's presence, close to Him, drawing in, as it were, into our souls the light of His love. This self-sacrifice has high honour, and, from certain points of view, it stands above all others. But, on the other hand, our Lord's self-sacrifice was more markedly of another kind: self-sacrifice not for His own sake, but for the sake of others.

II. The commandment of the text ranges from the highest to the lowest; it embraces the largest and it embraces the smallest thing that we can do. It penetrates because it is a spiritual force; it penetrates even into all the details of life; and it bids the man be self-sacrificing as in great things, so in small things, because what is asked of men is not the self-sacrifice itself, but the self-sacrificing spirit, which is sure to issue in self-sacrifice perpetual.

III. This spirit of self-sacrifice, as it is the duty of individuals, so is it the duty of the Church as a body. The Church as a body is called upon to labour earnestly for the good of men and the good of those who have been brought by baptism within her pale, for the good of those who are still outside. The Church is called upon perpetually to that self-sacrifice which made the Lord stretch out His hand all day long to a disbelieving and gainsaying people.

BISHOP TEMPLE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxviii., p. 337.

SECTARIANISM.

I. Our first association with religion is its bearing on our own souls and their salvation. He that has been struck by a great conviction is for the time isolated from his fellows. All the world for him centres round the single question, "What must I do to be saved?" For a time the Church and general interests are lost to view, just as the whole world would be to a man who had fallen into a crevasse, and who could have leisure for no other thought than how to extricate himself and how to get others to help him into safety. Such a man must for the

time look on his own things, not on the things of others. There are those who think that Christian separateness consists in being very unlike other men. Rather it should be said, Live in faith and prayer the same life that others live without them, and you have entered the true separate state of consecration to God.

II. There is the sectarianism of the congregation. We say, This is my Church; these are our forms of worship; this is our effort to do good. Without such appropriation of truth no Christian work can thrive. But if we mean that the work is ours to the exclusion of others or to the prejudice of others, sectarianism at once begins. We should try to see and to know each other's work, and to take part in common effort.

III. There is a denominational sectarianism. There are three things in which the advantage of amity among the denominations may be seen. (1) The first is that which occurs to us all: that, while we maintain a separate and defiant attitude, we waste our energies in collisions that cannot be avoided, and we are much weakened for all good purposes. (2) If we would deal with one another in the confidence of Christian brotherhood, our mutual influence for good would be increased a hundredfold. (3) Ministers and Church rulers of all denominations should ask themselves this question: how they will answer to Christ if they build up His people into the image of their own exclusiveness, instead of the image of the world-embracing love of their Lord.

W. H. Fremantle, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 385.

References: ii. 4.—A. Blomfield, *Sermons in Town and Country*, p. 158; W. Bennett, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 105; G. W. McCree, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 357; T. T. Lynch, *Sermons for my Curates*, p. 147; Forsyth Hamilton, *Pulpit Parables*, p. 66; J. Fraser, *Church Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 209.

Chap. ii., ver. 5.—**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."**

The True Imitation of Christ.

Consider two or three simple instances of the mode in which we may catch something of the true mind of Christ, and carry out into our lives something of a true *Imitatio Christi*.

I. There is, first of all, the readiness to forego, for the good of others, things to which we feel we have a fair claim. It seems a very homely lesson, yet so strong is the tendency to self-assertion and pride that we find both the Apostle and his Master laying on it an exceeding stress; a homely lesson, yet one which, strange to say, may bring opportunities of drawing

near to the mind of Christ, occasions in little things or in great.

II. Is not this a field in which we may seek for the mind which was in Christ Jesus? I do not mean only by being ready to do our appointed work with our whole hearts, but *by* recognising it as being the work set us by Him who sent us all into the world to work while it is day, by facing readily and cheerfully all that is distasteful and wearisome in the work, even as He bore the perpetual association with unsympathising dulness, with human ignorance, with scenes of misery, of disease, wretchedness, and sin.

III. Remember, too, another point in which we need the mind of Christ. Our work, our occupations, our recreations, are apt to take entire possession of us, to overwhelm us, to model us into their shape, to reduce us to their level; they cling to us like our shadows; they keep us from rising out of them or above them. Remember that He is recorded as having gone up from the crowded plain to the quiet hill, and there continued all night in prayer to God; and that we are told how the disciples went to their own home, but Jesus went to the mount of Olives. Surely we cannot fail if we wish to keep Him before our eyes to find even in the busiest life some still time for thought, for looking backwards and forwards, for withdrawing ourselves for a moment from the throng of common cares and pleasures to some peaceful hillside, from amidst the swarming and noisy flats of life, where we may snatch short times of insight and resolution which may be worked out in days of hurry or perhaps of gloom.

G. G. Bradley, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiii., p. 177.

I. St. Paul sees in the Passion of our Lord the crown and climax of the stupendous act of condescension which began in His incarnation. Being found in fashion as a Man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient, submitted Himself to the will of the Father, even to the point of drinking the cup, to His true human nature the bitter cup, of death. We may notice two points which St. Paul emphasises. (1) The condescension has its roots in our blessed Lord's conception of the scope and value of His own Divine prerogatives. It was He through whom all that is *is*, yet to Him that pre-eminence was not a thing to set store by in itself. From that infinite height He stooped to the level of the creatures of His hand, that He might serve. The Creator valued not His creative power, laid aside readily

the Creator's prerogatives, that He might help, might serve, His creature. (2) The condescension was complete, not measured or stinted. The cup was drained to the dregs. He came to do His Father's will, and He did it—"felt all, that He might pity all," bore what to man is the extremity of pain and shame, that He might save man from pain and shame.

II. There is something of the sense of passing from infinite differences to infinitesimal ones, of turning the eyes from light so bright that nothing for the time is visible after it, when we pass from contemplating this infinite self-humiliation to think how we can in any true sense imitate it. Yet St. Paul bids us so pass. It is his very purpose in so painting the Divine condescension: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The consciousness of this infinite condescension of God for us must transfigure life to us, break down once and for all our pride, show us the true proportions of things, open our hearts to Him who has done so much for us.

E. C. WICKHAM, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 35.

REFERENCES: ii. 5.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 191; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 185; R. W. Church, *Ibid.*, vol. xx., p. 181; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xi., p. 323; H. D. Rawnsley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxix., p. 298; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 273; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., pp. 164, 180, 193, 201; J. Edmunds, *Sixty Sermons*, p. 157; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. viii., p. 107.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-7.

THE Humiliation and Glory of Christ.

Consider the practical purposes of the Apostle in bringing this subject before us.

I. Among the chief of these is the inculcation of humility. This whole marvellous passage is brought before us, not for dogmatic teaching, but for moral example. The main intention is, not to reveal Jesus Christ as the foundation of a sinner's hope (although that is implied), but it is to point out the wonderful moral beauty of His condescension and to enforce it upon the regards of His followers for their devout and diligent imitation. Because He humbled Himself, because He pleased God, expressed the very mind of God, "God also hath highly exalted Him," and we are allowed to reason that with and in Him we too shall rise. The Master and the disciple, together treading the valley of humiliation, shall together sit on the throne. To be partaker of the sufferings is the sure pledge of participation in the glory.

II. "Work out your own salvation," this moral conformity to God, by following Christ; by cross-bearing; by self-denial; by descents into darkness with your lights, into misery with your joys; by holding yourself at the service of Christ; by making life a sacrifice and yourself a living victim; by filling yourself with the tenderness and Divine passion and unutterable love of the Cross.

A. RALEIGH, *From Dawn to the Perfect Day*, p. 282.

THE Incarnation a Lesson of Humility.

I. Christ "emptied Himself." He, the Creator, passed by the heavenly host, delivered not them by taking their nature, but came down to us, who were lower than the angels, last in order of His rational creation, and became as one of us. He emptied Himself of His immortality, and the Immortal died; He became subject to death, the penalty of sin. Not only in birth, in life, in death, but now also in His glory, He is content to be hidden still. So did He veil His majesty that because, as man, He confessed, "My Father is greater than I," some whom He came to redeem will not believe in Him; others believe not in Him as He is.

II. God incarnate preaches humility to His creature. For this is the foundation of the whole building of Christian virtues, or rather thus alone can we reach that foundation whereon we can build securely. The heathen had semblances or images of well-nigh every virtue; the heathen had self-devotion, contentment, contempt of the world without him and of the flesh; he had fortitude, endurance, self-denial, chastity, even a sort of reverence for God, whom he knew not; but he had not humility. The first beginning of Christian virtues is to lay aside pride.

III. Dig deep, then, the foundation of humility, so only mayest thou hope to reach the height of charity; for by humility alone canst thou reach that Rock which shall not be shaken, that is, Christ. Founded by humility on that Rock, the storms of the world shall not shake thee; the torrent of evil custom shall not bear thee away; the empty winds of vanity shall not cast thee down: founded deep on that Rock, thou mayest build day by day that tower whose top shall reach unto heaven, to the very presence of God, the sight of God, and shalt be able to finish it, for He shall raise thee thither who for thy sake abased Himself to us.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. i., p. 61.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-8.

THE Humiliation of the Eternal Son.

I. In looking into these words, we observe (1) that St. Paul clearly asserts Jesus Christ to have existed before His birth into the world. By saying that Jesus Christ existed in the form of God before He took on Him the form of a servant, St. Paul would have been understood by any one who read him in his own language to mean that, when as yet Christ had no human body or human soul, He was properly and literally God, because He existed in the form, and so possessed all the proper attributes, of God. (2) St. Paul goes on to say that, being God, Jesus Christ "thought it not robbery to be equal with God." This sentence would be more closely and clearly rendered, "Christ did not look on His equality with God as a prize to be jealously set store by." Men who are new to great positions always think more of them than those who have always enjoyed them. Christ, who was God from everlasting, laid no stress on this His eternal greatness; He emptied Himself of His Divine prerogatives or glory. (3) Of this self-humiliation St. Paul traces three distinct stages. The first consists in Christ's taking on Himself the form of a servant or slave. By this expression St. Paul means human nature. Without ceasing to be what He was, what He could not but be, He wrapped around Himself a created form, through which He would hold converse with men, in which He would suffer, in which He would die. The second stage of His humiliation is that Christ did not merely take human nature on Him; He became obedient to death. The third stage in this humiliation is that, when all modes of death were open to Him, He chose that which would bring with it the greatest share of pain and shame. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." When on the cross of shame He endures the sharpness of death, He is only completing that emptying Himself of His glory which began when, "taking upon Himself to deliver man, He did not abhor the Virgin's womb."

II. Why may we suppose that God, by His providence acting in His Church, places before our eyes this most suggestive passage of Holy Scripture on the Sunday next before Easter? (1) We stand to-day on the threshold of the great week which in the thought of a well-instructed Christian, whose heart is in its right place, is beyond all comparison the most solemn week in the whole year. It is of the first importance that we should answer clearly this primary question: "Who is the Sufferer?"

That which gives to the Passion and death of our Lord its real value is the fact that the Sufferer is more than man; that, although He suffers in and through a created nature, He is personally God. (2) The lesson which St. Paul draws for the benefit of the Philippians from the consideration of the Incarnation and Passion is a lesson which is as valuable to us as members of civil society, as it is valuable to members of the Church of Christ. If Christ did not set store on glory which was rightfully, inalienably His, why should we? All who have lived for others rather than for themselves in His Church have been true to Him, true to the spirit of His incarnation and death, true to what St. Paul calls "the mind that was in Christ Jesus."

H. P. LIDDON, *Passiontide Sermons*, p. 18.

THE Mystery of the Cross.

I. We all agree that God is good; all, at least, do so who worship Him in spirit and in truth. We adore His majesty because it is the moral and spiritual majesty of perfect goodness; we give thanks to Him for His great glory because it is the glory, not merely of perfect power, wisdom, order, justice, but of perfect love, of perfect magnanimity, beneficence, activity, condescension, pity, in one word of perfect grace. But how much must the last word comprehend as long as there is misery and evil in the world, or in any other corner of the whole universe! Grace, to be perfect, must show itself by graciously forgiving penitents; pity, to be perfect, must show itself by helping the miserable; beneficence, to be perfect, must show itself by delivering the oppressed.

II. The Apostles believed, and all those who accepted their Gospel believed, that they had found for the word "grace" a deeper meaning than had ever been revealed to the prophets of old time; that grace and goodness, if they were perfect, involved self-sacrifice. If man can be so good, God must be infinitely better; if man can love so much, God must love more; if man, by shaking off the selfishness which is his bane, can do noble deeds, then God, in whom is no selfishness at all, may at least have done a deed as far above *his* as the heavens are above the earth. Shall we not confess that man's self-sacrifice is but a poor and dim reflection of the self-sacrifice of God? Shall we not find, as thousands have found ere now, in the Cross of Calvary, the perfect satisfaction of our highest moral instincts, the realisation in act and fact of the highest idea which we can

form of perfect condescension, namely, self-sacrifice exercised by a Being of whom perfect condescension, love, and self-sacrifice were not required by aught in heaven or on earth save by the necessity of His own perfect and inconceivable goodness?

C. KINGSLEY, *Westminster Sermons*, p. 1.

REFERENCES: ii. 5-8.—G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 75; T. A. White, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 159; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 88. ii. 5-9.—*Ibid.*, vol. vi., p. 148.

Chap. ii., vers. 5-11.

THESE delineations of Christ reveal the true method of rendering moral service to man. Human deliverance and progress will remain a theory only until men come to work upon the method here stated. Great philanthropic programmes must begin at Bethlehem and comprehend the mysteries of Golgotha if ever they would ascend from Bethany into the heavens. To serve man, Christ became man; so in serving others we must identify ourselves with them.

I. This identification of Himself with the human race made Christ accessible to all classes. We, too, in our philanthropic work must go down.

II. Christ's piety was not a mere index finger. Instead of saying, "That is the way," He said, "I am the Way." A man's whole moral vitality must constitute his redeeming power.

III. Does it not degrade a man to have this personal association with human vice and misery? The answer may be given in a question: Was Christ degraded? A man's spirit will determine his fate. Benevolence will come forth unpolluted as a sunbeam, beautiful as summer's purest flower.

IV. Condescension is not degradation. Christ speaks in monosyllables, as it were; He pronounces each word with emphasis, giving each a wide circumference, until every tone penetrates the listener's ear. Be Godlike, and come down to those whom you would save.

PARKER, *City Temple*, vol. ii., p. 213.

REFERENCES: ii. 5-11.—C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 193; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 82; J. Vaughan, *Fifty Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 52.

Chap. ii., vers. 6, 7.

I. THE Son of God was in the form of God: glorious as the Father; equal to the Father; the Creator and Upholder of the

universe. Notwithstanding, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, *i.e.*—for the words are obscure as they now stand—He deemed not His equality with God a matter eagerly to be grasped by Him; did not think of it as the robber does of his prey, so that he would not on any account let it go; esteemed it not matter of self-enrichment or self-indulgence. He looked on His Divine glory and majesty as willing, if need be, to detach them from Himself, if He might thus the better fulfil the great end of His Divine being: the expression of the Father's will and the showing forth of the brightness of His glory. He made Himself of no reputation; literally, He emptied Himself. He laid aside, not His Divine nature—for that was His very being—not His Divine person as the Son of God, not His purity and holiness—for these were the essential elements of His Divine nature and person—but all accessories to these: all power, all majesty, all renown, yea and what is more mysterious still to our apprehension: all that infinite knowledge of all things with which as God and Creator He was clothed.

II. "He was made in the likeness of man." From being a glorious uncreated Being He became enshrined in a created nature, became as to His outward form a creature and subject to the laws of the creature: hunger; weariness; pain; death. We in vain endeavour to form any idea of this vast descent into degradation of the Son of God. When He, in His glory and His joy, took on Him the character of Redeemer, He knew what was in man; He saw all the depths of depravity, all the wonders of selfishness, all the pollutions of sin, of which this our nature was capable, and to which it would degrade itself: and He shrank not from contact with, from identification with, the vessel which had been thus defiled. We shall never know what Christ's humiliation was till we know what His exaltation and His glory are. The eye which cannot bear the light above is dazzled and misted when it contemplates the depth of darkness below.

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 35.

References: ii. 6-11.—W. Harris, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 276.

Chap. ii., ver. 7.—"And was made in the likeness of men."

I. We must be careful that we do not suffer our knowledge of the perfect Deity of Jesus Christ to confound or weaken our apprehension of His entire and essential manhood. A very little error on this point may lead to the worst consequences. For

instance, if Christ be not absolutely a Man, if His Divinity come in in the least degree to qualify human nature, then He practically almost ceases to stand forth as an example which we are to follow. For the answer will be always ready to our lips, He is of a different and distinct order; imitation is impossible, for He was Himself holy by Deity: and besides this, unless He be perfect man, His death may carry the form of an infinite sacrifice, but it cannot be viewed in the light of a strict substitution.

II. The manhood which Christ assumed is full of the deepest comfort to His Church. For observe its consequence. All the nature of our race was gathered and concentrated into the one human life. He stood forth the great representative Man; what He did, it was as though we had done it: what He bore, it was as though we had suffered it. But were even one iota taken out of the manhood of Jesus, the parallel of the work would cease, and the provisions of the mediatorial scheme would fail. Therefore St. John twice makes the belief in it essential to our salvation. "Whosoever confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is born of God."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 1.

Chap. ii., ver. 7.—"And took upon Him the form of a servant."

CHRIST a Slave.

The word *servant* will convey to us in this present age a very inadequate idea of the degree of the degradation of which it is the figure. For service has been dignified since Jesus was a servant. We know nothing now more really honourable than Christian service. But let us not forget that He first taught us to call servants friends.

I. Notice one or two of the laws and customs respecting Jewish slaves, that you may see the correctness of the title and the exceeding extent of the humiliation of Jesus. (1) No slave among the Jews could have any position or right as a citizen; he had no political standing. If injured, he had no redress; if assaulted, no protection. And very accurate was the counterpart in our Saviour's life when subjected to the most outrageous violence and wrong. No arm of law was ever outstretched for His defence. (2) The slave could hold no property whatever. And what had He, the Servant of servants? Which of the world's paupers ever walked the earth as poor as the world's Creator? (3) And every slave was in the eyes of the law a mere piece of goods and chattels, which could be bought and sold. It was in

the strictness therefore of the letter of the law to which He subjected Himself when for the base sum of less than three pounds Judas sold Him. (4) And when he died, the slave was still pursued by his brand; he might be scourged and tortured, and a last distinctive punishment was assigned him: the cross. So Jesus under the lash and on the tree was the slave.

II. As a servant or slave Christ had two duties to execute. The first was to His Father; (2) the second was to His people. What He did the last night in the upper chamber is only an epitome of His whole life; the girded towel and the basin in the hand characterised the Man. He is always going to persons' feet; He is always performing inferior offices; He is always in the attitude of some active ministration; He takes His Church as a charge committed to Him by God, and He honours and tends each one, as a servant does his lord's friends, and of each one He is able to give in the good account at last, "Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874.

REFERENCE: ii. 7, 8.—W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of the Passion*, p. 3.

Chap. ii., ver. 8.—**"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."**

THE Humility of Christ.

I. Among the virtues of Christ's humanity brought to dwell among men was humility, a virtue which lies at the foundation of the Christian character, a virtue unknown to the moral philosophy of the ancient world. "Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself." The Apostle is not now speaking of the infinite condescension whereby He as God left the glory that He had with the Father before the worlds were made, but rather he is speaking of the humility of Christ as man, by which as a Child, though conscious that He was about His Father's business, He went down to Nazareth, and was subject to Joseph and Mary, that humility by which He became obedient unto death, even the shameful, ignominious death of the cross.

II. Humility is the direct opposite and contradiction of the spirit which, in the case of those who possessed high privileges among the sons of God, exalted them against God; and so they fell from heaven. And therefore, as humility is the groundwork and beginning of the Christian life, so it is the ingredient and accompaniment of all progress in heavenly virtue, the lowly handmaid of true charity.

III. Hard it is for human souls to keep humility and strength. According to the world's estimation, humility is at a discount. And another difficulty arises from the fact that the counterfeits of humility are so detestable. But if the counterfeits are base, genuine humility, sterling modesty, bear none the less the stamp and impress of the Divine character ; and if they be not current in the world, yet surely they pass without question for their full value in the Christian life. With humility come the grace, the courage, the fortitude, necessary for the Christian warfare. The truly brave are, as a rule, modest and humble. And, finally, humility is a brave helper and comforter in sorrow, and trial, and tribulation ; and when the end draws nigh, it has the peace of resignation, it has the calm assurance of the presence of the Comforter within, with whom the soul can fear no evil, though it be in the valley of the shadow of death.

E. WARRE, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiii., p. 209.

CHRIST Degraded.

I. Consider the manner in which Christ as a Man took the lowest place and did the meanest part. Here is the most beautiful feature in all the exquisite portraiture of His humiliation : that at the time He did any of the acts of His wonderful life the humiliation was never prominent and seldom apparent. For had you met Jesus in one of His usual walks of mercy, or sat with Him at the meal, or listened to Him as He spoke, I do not imagine that you would have been impressed at once and very consciously with the lowliness of the transaction, as though He were doing some very wonderfully condescending thing. That is what we often do—a posture, a garb, a studied word—and we call it humility. But there would have been a depth of self-forgetfulness in all which Christ said and did and was which would tell on you in a way which you could scarcely clothe in language, but when you looked quietly back upon it, it would amazingly grow upon you in the greatness of its quiet modesty. And this is the truth of the grace of a humble mind : it is too humble to look humble ; it hides self so well that the act which hides it is not seen—the humility is humbled.

II. The great lesson of every Christmas is humility. The genius of the life of Jesus from its cradle to its glory was self-abandonment, the most self-denying love, robing itself in the most self-forgetting modesty. He cast His own deeds into the shade by the very light which threw a radiance on the actions of His people. If He told us to take the lowest seat, Himself

chose a lower still than all His followers, and burying unparalleled glories in unequalled sufferings, He was to men only a Servant and to God nothing but a Child.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 9.

I. CHRIST's death was not a mere martyrdom. A martyr is one who dies for the Church, who is put to death for preaching and maintaining the truth. Christ indeed was put to death for maintaining the Gospel, yet He was not a martyr, but He was much more than a martyr. Had He been a mere man, He would have been rightly called a martyr; but as He was not a mere man, so He was not a mere martyr. Man dies as a martyr, but the Son of man dies as an atoning Sacrifice. The sufferings and death of the Word incarnate could not pass away like a dream; they could not be a mere martyrdom or a mere display or figure of something else; they must have had a virtue in them. This we might be sure of, though nothing had been told us about the result; but the result is also revealed—it is this: our reconciliation to God, the expiation of our sins, and our new creation in holiness.

II. We believe that when Christ suffered on the cross our nature suffered in Him. Human nature, fallen and corrupt, was under the wrath of God, and it was impossible that it should be restored to His favour till it had expiated its sin by suffering. In Him our sinful nature died and rose again; when it died in Him on the cross, that death was its new creation: in Him it satisfied its old and heavy debt, for the presence of His Divinity gave it transcendent merit. His presence had kept it pure from sin from the first; His personal indwelling hallowed it and gave it power. And thus, when it had been offered up upon the cross and was made perfect by suffering, it became the firstfruits of a new man; it became a Divine leaven of holiness for the new birth and spiritual life of as many as should receive it.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 69.

REFERENCES: ii. 8.—Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 328; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 94; C. J. Vaughan, *Words of Hope*, p. 162; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 85; Spurgeon, *Evening by Evening*, p. 155; J. Vaughan, *Sermons*, 1869, p. 234. ii. 9.—Philpot, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 265; *Homilist*, 2nd series, p. 541; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. i., p. 267; J. Cairns, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 315. ii. 9-11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 101; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 109; *Ibid.*, vol. xviii., p. 293; *Ibid.*, vol. xxx., p. 282; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 222.

Chap. ii., ver. 10.—"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

I. Even angels are to worship in the name of Jesus. It is, however, more to the purpose for us to remember that God desires men, all men, so to worship. And it is a thought at once solemnising and comforting that not only living men, but the dead also, are required to call upon God in the name of Jesus. It is assumed in the words of our text that all God's creatures will bend the knee somehow. Prayer is an instinct of nature. God has so made us that we feel a power above us, and desire that that power should be friendly to us, and not hostile. The first element of prayer is the calling in of that power, the praying it not to be unfriendly to us, not to exert itself to crush, but to benefit, to bless, to save. The poor idolater does that. All his miserable superstitions point that way. Prayer in some form is an instinct. But is prayer in the name of Jesus an instinct? Is it the prayer which even Christians always offer? That is the name which is our passport; that is the name which has power with God and prevails; that is the name which we must take with us if we would know what it is to be heard and to be answered.

II. And that every tongue may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. This is the second part of the design of the exaltation of Jesus. God will have Him owned as Lord throughout the whole world. Yes, the praises of the Church as well as the prayers of the Church have a value in heaven. The religion of many Christians never gets beyond prayer. There is not a word of praise in it; there is no bold, frank, honest avowal of convictions deeply cherished as to the person and the work of Christ. The language of praise in God's worship ought to be consistent with the still more real language of the life. "Why call ye Me Lord, Lord," our Saviour Himself asks of us, "and do not the things which I say?" If the tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, ought not our acts and common words, our habits and principles, our aims and motives, to say the same thing? The acknowledgment which is frank and emphatic ought to be consistent also and harmonious.

C. J. Vaughan, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 103.

Reference: ii. 11.—W. Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 109.

Chap. ii., ver. 12.—"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

Working out Salvation.

(1) This counsel implies that something has been already done. The very phrase "Work out" suggests this. The

salvation has been begun, and is in one sense a complete thing. We stand still and see the salvation of God. (2) The exhortation implies that something more is to be done: "Work out your own salvation." Then it is not only a work done for us and without us, but it is a continual process within us. There is a new life created, and the life grows, as every life does, and must grow or die.

I. We work out our own salvation by the acquisition of spiritual truth. There is a danger in resting satisfied with a faith received by tradition from our fathers. While it is unwise to break away from the past, it is equally unwise to reject the new truth that may be revealed to us and to close our minds against reasonable and honest convictions.

II. There will then be progress in character. The spiritual truth thus acquired will be the food of the soul, supporting and strengthening it; the faith that was once like a weak thread binding us to Christ will become a cable to hold the ship from drifting in the storm.

III. This work must advance even in the absence of means which are important. God may deprive you of your compass and keep the north star all the more brightly before you; He may take away the Apostle, and yet grant a fuller revelation of Christ.

IV. Think of the spirit in which we are to do the work. There is no room for presumption, but much for precaution and self-distrust. "Be not high-minded, but fear."

J. Owen, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxii., p. 237.

References: ii. 12.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 1003; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. viii., p. 144; F. W. Farrar, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xviii., p. 337.

Chap. ii., vers. 12, 13.

I. A Christian man has his whole salvation already accomplished for him in Christ, and yet he is to work it out. Work as well as believe, and in the daily practice of faithful obedience, in the daily subjugation of your own spirits to His Divine power, in the daily crucifixion of your flesh, with its affections and lusts, in the daily straining after loftier heights of godliness and purer atmospheres of devotion and love, make more thoroughly your own that which you possess. Work into the substance of your souls that which you *have*. "Apprehend that for which you are apprehended of Christ," "Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure," and remember that not

a past act of faith, but a present and continuous life of loving, faithful work in Christ, which is His and yet yours, is the holding fast the beginning of your confidence firm unto the end.

II. God works all in us, and yet we have to work. The Apostle did not absorb all our individuality in one great Divine cause which made men mere tools and puppets; he did not believe that the inference was, Do you sit still and feel yourselves the ciphers that you are. His practical conclusion is the very opposite; it is, God does all: therefore do you work. Work, for God works in you.

III. The Christian has his salvation secured, and yet he is to fear and tremble. Your faith can be worth nothing unless it has, bedded deep in it, that trembling distrust of your own power which is the pre-requisite and the companion of all thankful and faithful reception of God's infinite mercy.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons*, p. 215.

THE Twofold Force in Salvation.

This sentence falls from the lips of St. Paul as easy and natural as his breath. It has no particular emphasis, no special importance; it is not a climax either of thought or feeling; it is not a definition; it shows no trace of a long or careful process of thought of which it is the conclusion. As it came from St. Paul it was a simple, natural, almost commonplace exhortation to earnestness, with the encouragement that God would cooperate, as any one of us might say to one another, Work with all your might, and God will help you. St. Paul says simply this: Strive for your salvation; work it out yourself; do not rely on others; it is your own matter, and a very serious one: hence be earnest about it; do not trifle nor take it for granted that you will be saved; if you ever see salvation you must work for it with fear and trembling, or you may fail of it. But at the same time remember also, for your encouragement, that while you work God also works in you; He wills in your will; He acts in your act. If you are earnest in this matter and have an honest heart about it, you may rely on the fact that God is at work in you, the soul and energy of the whole process. Such, and so simple, is the thought. But, simple as it is, it teaches several important lessons.

I. That salvation is an achievement. It was a moral process that St. Paul had in mind. If a man has any sinful habits, he must overcome them; if he has any lacks or weaknesses, he

must work to supply the deficiency. And then there is the great reality of character—a welded group of qualities that only comes about by elaboration. The qualities may have a natural root or ground, but each one must be worked out; it must come under the conscience and the will; it must be tried, and shaped, and fed, and worked into the substance of the character.

II. This achievement of salvation is at the cost of sharp and definite strife. All the various works that are commonly assigned to man are works of deliverance or salvation; they resolve themselves at last to that complexion, and properly take on that designation. You can have no better or truer name for the great world-work of man than salvation. And as salvation is the great world business, so is it the main thing every man has to do. When the house of his heart is swept clean, and the faulty or vicious disposition is brought under control, then there opens before him the great positive work of salvation; then he may begin to build himself up into the proportions of true spiritual manhood.

III. The world does not exist by itself; it exists in God. Man does not live, machine-like, by himself; he lives, and moves, and has and holds his being, in God. His energy and force are not his own, but flow out of God. He has, indeed, a free will, but God is the source of it; but, because it is a free will, God can only act with it and by its consent. He is not, however, excluded from the realm of our nature. God may enter the will, and fill it with power, and work with it, without impairing its nature or injuring the value of its action. Use your will; work out your salvation with fear and trembling, that is, in humble, dead earnestness; when you so work, God is working with you. It is all His; it is all yours: it is each; it is both: it is neither alone; together they are one.

T. T. MUNGER, *The Appeal to Life*, p. 169.

I. THERE is a sense in which salvation is not yet wrought out, not yet accomplished, not yet wrought so as to be wrought successfully. The Christian is saved; Christ has borne his sins; Christ has done all for him; Christ is his sufficient sacrifice; Christ is his availing Intercessor; Christ is charged with his soul; Christ is already his Life; and because Christ lives, he lives also: but yet, though saved, he is not safe; though all has been done for him, he is not in repose; though his true life is hid with Christ in God, yet his lower life is still lived on

earth, in a world of abounding temptation, of perpetual turmoil, of overflowing iniquity, of unrest therefore, of anxiety, yes of risk. Like St. Peter walking upon the water, he is safe while he looks to Christ; but he is not safe from the danger of looking off from Christ. If he does that, he begins to sink. Perseverance is a privilege of the elect; but what sign is there of the elect, what infallible sign, save perseverance? He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved; till that endurance is completed, who shall presume upon it? The condition of the Christian is made up of various, of opposite, ingredients. There is sorrow for sin; there is peace in believing; there is the fear of God; there is the love of God; there is salvation rejoiced in; there is salvation to be wrought out.

II. Let us now turn to the opposite half of the text. A Christian must work out his own salvation; that is one truth: it is God who works in him both to will and to do; that is the other truth. Let us say then to ourselves, If it is God who works in Christians both to will and to do, to Him will I seek, for Him will I wait, with Him will I abide, day by day, that He may both lay in me the train of holy resolution, and also kindle it into action by the spark of His grace.

We have in the subject (1) a motive of warning and (2) a motive of hope.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 119

THE Work of the Christian Life.

I. The exhortation. There is a sense in which salvation is no work of ours, but is simply the free gift of God in Christ Jesus. But salvation is a great deal more than forgiveness. It is not enough that our souls are pardoned and justified through the faith of Christ unless we are also delivered from those evil tendencies, habits, and likings, those lusts of the flesh and of the mind, which are, after all, the real ruin of our souls. In this view of it, salvation must be wrought out by us, not merely for us. For this part of it our co-operation is as essential as God's grace. Let us be up and doing, busy and earnest, patient, faithful, struggling with sinful lusts and habits, mortifying the flesh, and reaching forth and pressing on to the mark for the prize of our high calling. So let us give all diligence to work out our salvation.

II. The encouragement. God is working in us, and He is mighty to save. All the feelings you have that seem to discourage you ought to encourage you as being tokens of His

working in you. Let not your heart be troubled, only let not your hand be slack, for He will have you to be working along with Him.

III. The manner of the work: "with fear and trembling." The very earnestness, the very devotion, the very eagerness, of Christian love and hope become a kind of fear. Such a responsibility we have for the grace shown to us in Christ; such a labour lies before us ere in Christ we are meet for the inheritance of the saints. The Christian must needs work on with fear and trembling, with diligence, watchfulness, and hopefulness, yielding up his soul to every impulse from on high to make his calling and election sure.

W. C. SMITH, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxiv., p. 81.

REFERENCES: ii. 12, 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xiv., No. 820; D. Rhys Jenkins, *The Eternal Life*, p. 242; G. Huntingdon, *Sermons for Holy Seasons*, p. 199; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, p. 80; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. i., p. 180; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vi., p. 131; *Ibid.*, vol. x., p. 410; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. x., p. 23; Redpath, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 301. ii. 12-18.—J. J. Goadby, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 345. ii. 13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 362; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 306; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iii., p. 243. ii. 14, 15.—Gregory, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 49.

Chap. ii., vers. 14-16.

THE Duties of a Church towards its Neighbourhood.

I. The relation of a Church to a neighbourhood is that of salt to the land. Prejudice may be dispersed, and men be favourably disposed to the truth, (1) by the irreproachable character of the individual members of a Church; (2) by the harmony and brotherly love of a Church; (3) by the inviting aspect of the public worship and ministry of a Church; (4) by Churches forming benevolent institutions in their neighbourhood.

II. The relation of a Church to a neighbourhood is that of light to the world. A Church can testify to the truth (1) by providing and sustaining an efficient ministry; (2) by every member ministering as he hath received the gift; (3) by cherishing and exercising a spirit worthy of its vocation.

III. The individual members of any locality so circumscribed as to admit of fellowship are to that locality as separate stars in one constellation, and the Churches of such a locality are thereto as so many golden candlesticks in one holy place.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 491.

REFERENCES: ii. 14-16.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 472; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 301.

Chap. ii., ver. 15.—"The sons of God."

Sons of God.

I. Sons of God. Let us inquire into the nature of the relationship. (1) The sons of God are here clearly distinguished from the world. It is a title in whose honour all then living, man as man, had not a right to share. But how does this square with the doctrine of the universal fatherhood, with the right which we claim for every human spirit to say, "My Father," with the assertion which we maintain that in regeneration a relation to God is not for the first time created, but renewed, and in a higher and more glorious form restored? I think we shall see our way through the difficulty if we recognise that children and sons are not co-ordinate here. The one is a higher power of the other; the one is the base out of which the other is to be evolved. The children, those made in the Father's likeness, alone can become sons, children of His Spirit; but before the child grows into the son there must have been a spiritual unfolding of the Father's likeness, which makes the children sons indeed. Man universally may be a child of the great Father; but he may be a sensual child, a rebellious child, a sullen, envious child, a prodigal child; and to such God accords not the name of sons. Children He still calls them; a Father's duties He still amply fulfils; a Father's tenderness He feels; a Father's sorrows He knows: but sons they are not; they cannot be until the spirit of sonship is in them, until all the higher and heaven-born elements of their being conspire to make the relation of the child effectual to the gladdening of the Father's home, the doing of the Father's work, the blessing of the Father's heart. (2) And this is what regeneration means. It is the begetting of the spiritual sonship, the carrying up of the child's relation through all the higher powers and faculties of the human spirit, and yielding to God this child complete. And this needs a spiritual regeneration. Life must be kindled from the source of life and grow by communion with it.

II. The manifestation of sonship and its fruits. Christ first exalted goodness to the throne of the world. Force had been the Divine thing till then. It was to be the sheer force of goodness which should bear the Christian on to the spiritual conquest of mankind. There is nothing exclusive about sonship. "Holding forth the word of life." Why? That men may live also. The sons are to be magnets to draw the children to the Father, that they may be received as sons. This is the essential

element of the light that they are to hold forth: the word of life, the word of sonship, the word of regeneration; they are to reveal the Father and the sons. One glimpse of a home to an exile is the sweetest attraction you can offer. That is the meaning of a Church: God's home; Christ's home for souls. And what a Church is on a large scale a home should be on a small one. This it is to be a light in the world, and to hold forth the word of life. God is calling for sons, that He may win more. Each son won home becomes a source of vital attraction and compels others. His house is filling fast. Each generation yields its elect spirits to people heaven; but there is room yet, will be room, till that great day of restitution, "the day of the manifestation of the sons of God."

J. B. BROWN, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 40.

REFERENCES: ii. 15.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 250; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., p. 462; F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, p. 316. ii. 15, 16.—*Outline Sermons to Children*, p. 251.

Chap. ii., ver. 16.—"Holding forth the word of life."

IN the very act of working out his own salvation, if he be rightly taught what the charge means, a man will be, incidentally at least, holding forth or applying to others the word of life. This is true in some measure. But so prone are we all to selfishness, so prone to religious selfishness when we are driven out of the selfishness which is altogether indolent and worldly, and so many are those who would foster this spiritual selfishness by precepts distorted from the Gospel, that it is necessary to give reality and prominence to the charge before us by examining it separately and in detail.

I. Your work on earth is not done when you have saved yourself from an untoward generation. You have still to hold your lamp as far as you can into the dark mass around. God does not call you to a timid, fugitive, skulking piety, a religion which has to lock its doors and bar its windows, that it may be alone by itself in the sight of a God who seeth in secret. There is a part of it which has to do this; to be worth anything even for purposes of diffusion, the lamp must be kindled in secret, and fed in secret, and trimmed in secret; we can soon tell those whose religion has no such seclusion; but the office of the lamp is to shine. Men do not light a candle to put it under a bed, but to set it on a candlestick, that it may give light to all that are in the house. Even so it is with the Christian's lamp, which is the word of life.

II. Note two of our modes of influence. (1) Example. There is no engine so powerful in its effects upon human life. (2) Sympathy. There is a way of presenting the Gospel, in word and even in example, which wholly fails to attract or to persuade. He that *winneth* souls is wise, not he that alarms, or he that drives, or he that coerces and constrains, but he that *winneth* souls. It becomes one who would discharge his conscience in this matter to examine not only the correctness, but the attractiveness, of his example.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 135.

Chap. ii., ver. 20.—"I have no man like-minded."

THE Experience of Isolation.

I. It is a common complaint amongst us that we want sympathy. We are lonely, we say. If not actually solitary, we are solitary in feeling and in heart. In later life people make up their minds to this, as a condition of earthly life. They have fought against it in youth; they have deemed it intolerable; they have thought existence itself valueless without sympathy. Now and then they have fancied for a brief time that they had found a sympathy real and indestructible below, but they have outlived the hope; they have known perhaps many such hopes one by one, and they have outlived them all. It is well if they have not too much acquiesced in this experience. The young are too impatient, too imperious, in their demand for sympathy; the old are sometimes too tolerant, at least too fond, of isolation.

II. St. Paul's thirst for human love was not that sentimental, sickly, vague, purposeless thing which may sometimes amongst us take its name; it was not the case with him, as it too often is with us, that his heart's best affections were roving in quest of an object, and that until the object presented itself in some human form he was a restless and dissatisfied man. St. Paul's best affections were engaged and fixed unalterably. The sympathy he sought was a sympathy in his work for Christ; the loneliness he bewailed was a loneliness in his care for Christ's people. And if sympathy like this be still, as it sometimes was with St. Paul, denied or interrupted, yet even then we shall learn, like him, in whatever state we are, therewith to be content. If we really love Christ and are trying day by day to serve Him, we have within us the root of all comfort and the spring of all sympathy. They who are united in Him are united really in one another.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 151.

Chap. ii., vers. 20, 21.

I. In these and like passages of the Epistles of St. Paul written subsequently to his imprisonment, we may trace signs of one of the many trials of the Apostle's life; and it is one which we hardly perhaps estimate at its real measure. St. Paul's life at this time must have seemed like what we call a failure. The great work for which he lived had shattered itself against the natural obstacles of a firmly established order: religion; law; the habits and prejudices of society; the recognised indulgences of human passion. His missionary journeys had come to an end, and he had not reconciled Jew and Gentile, his brethren after the flesh, so dear to him, his brethren after the promise, his crown and joy. The tide which had carried him so high was ebbing, and left him lonely and deserted, hardly recognised or cared for, except by his distant friends in the East. "Demas hath forsaken me." "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all forsook me," are the words of his last Roman letter. His career, his zeal, had ended in disaster. This is what it seemed to have come to; this is what it would have appeared to friend and foe when the old man was led out along the Ossian Way to die, he who had laid the foundations of the Church universal, the Church of all the nations, he who had left a name than which no earthly name is greater, than which there is no greater among the saints of God.

II. To a faith like St. Paul's these adverse appearances, though they might wring from him as they passed a cry of pain and distress, wore a very different aspect and took very different proportions from what they would have to the world. To him the mere vicissitudes of a mortal career would be nothing more strange than the variations in his health or in the number of his years. They were but part of his Master's use of him, part of that cross by which the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. So that he had faithfully done what God wanted of him, the outward features of that small fragment of time which we call his life were of slight moment. It mattered little that so much that seemed a course which had begun triumphantly seemed to end among the breakers. It mattered little to himself when he died that the world of his day pronounced the enterprise of his life a mistake and a failure.

III. Do not let us be afraid in a good cause of the chances of failure. "Heaven is for those who have failed on earth," says the mocking proverb; and since the day of Calvary no Christian need be ashamed to accept it. The world would have missed some of its highest examples if men had always waited till they

could make a covenant with success. There in the light beyond the veil, and not here, we shall really know which are the lost causes and which are the victorious ones; those who have not been afraid to be like Him here shall be like Him there, for they shall see Him as He is.

DEAN CHURCH, *Oxford University Herald*, Feb. 18th, 1882.

Chap. ii., ver. 21.—"All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's."

THE Life of Christ the Only True Idea of Self-devotion.

There is something peculiarly touching in the saddened tone of these few words, in which St. Paul glances at the slackness of his fellow-labourers. It must have been a cross almost too heavy to bear without complaining when from his prison-house at Rome he saw his brethren in Christ drawing off one by one from the hardness of their Master's service; it must have been a provocation almost beyond endurance to see day by day tokens of a faint heart and a selfish purpose coming out in the words and acts of those on whom he most depended. It added to his bondage the worst form of desolation: the loneliness of a high unbroken spirit in the throng of shrinking and inconstant men. The heart-sin of which St. Paul writes is a refined selfishness, so plausibly defended, so strongly entrenched in reasonable pleadings, as to leave him no more to do, than to expostulate and to be silent, to give them a fair opening to do high service for their Master and then to pass them by and choose some worthier and bolder men. The peculiar danger of this fault may be seen by the following remarks:—

I. It may consist with all that the Church requires of her people as a condition of communion in her fullest privileges. A man may be under the dominion of this paralysing fault, and yet really live in many ways a Christian life. A very large part of Christianity is directly favourable to a man's worldly interests: all that goes to the establishing of a fair reputation and to the conciliation of goodwill is full of solid advantage; self-regard and self-respect urgently prescribe to a man such a habit of life as shall be in accordance with the outward example of Christ's true servants.

II. This habit of mind, while it satisfies the external demands of the Church and ministers to the inward happiness of the mind, absolutely extinguishes all that ever produced any great work in Christ's service; it stunts the whole spirit at the standard of self, and makes all a man's thoughts and powers

minister and submit themselves to his own aim and purpose. None are so hard to rouse to great works of faith as such men. If we should plead with a Magdalene out of whom have been cast seven devils, or a Peter who hath thrice denied his Lord, or a Paul who hath made havoc of the Church, there is material for a substantive and vivid character; there is energy for a life above the world. Conformed to the likeness of their Lord, the examples of all living men are no more to them than the gaudy, shifting clouds of an evening sky; moving along the path of the Cross, all the soft and silken curtains of life are as threads of idle gossamer. There is about them a moral weight, and an onward force, and a clear definite outline of character, before which everything gives way. They hurry all before them as by the spell of absolute dominion. Oh that we did but know the freedom and the happiness of a life above the world! They whose names are splendid with the most hallowed light have in their day moved along all paths of life. None so wise, so courteous, so beloved, as they; none richer nor more prosperous; none more faithful in their stewardship of this world's wealth; none bequeathed costlier heirlooms to their children's children, and that because they sought not their own, but the things that were Jesus Christ's.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 146.

REFERENCES: ii. 21.—J. F. Tinling, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 191; Parker, *Pulpit Analyst*, vol. ii., p. 498.

Chap. ii., ver. 27.—"He was sick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him."

I. Is this the same Apostle who wrote above, I have a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better? Does he account it a mercy on the part of God which withdraws a Christian man from the immediate fruition of the inheritance of the saints in light? The words are so; and lest we should too much qualify their meaning or say that the mercy spoken of was shown not to the man himself, but to those around him, who needed his ministration or might be benefited by his life, he adds immediately after, "and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." We may gather from this saying an illustration of the naturalness of the word of God. However bright the light which the Gospel throws upon the world beyond death, and however dim by comparison the glory which shines upon the present, still life is a blessing, and still death is an enemy. To speak of death itself as a pleasure is a

fantastic and unreal language; to speak of a recovery from sickness as a misfortune is as contradictory to the language of the Bible as it is to the voice of nature within.

II. The word of God has ever two aspects. If God wills this, it is well for the Christian, and if God wills the opposite of this, yet for the Christian it is well still. If he lives, that is the fruit of his labour; he can still work on, gather in more souls for Christ, shine more brightly himself as he holds forth the word of life: and if he rises not, if he passes only from his bed to his coffin, from his chamber to his grave, even then—then even more, shall we say?—God had mercy on him, saw that he was meet for the inheritance above, and therefore, by a transition sharp but blessed, bade him enter in and rest for ever in the Lord.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 167.

REFERENCES: ii. 29.—W. Braden, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 225. ii.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. v., pp. 103, 558. iii. 1-11.—J. J. Goadby, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 90. iii. 2.—J. N. Norton, *The King's Ferry Boat*, p. 225.

Chap. iii., ver. 3.—"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

THE Inheritors of the Promises.

I. They who worship God in the spirit are the sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

II. They behold the brightness of the Father's glory.

III. They inherit great and precious promises.

IV. They are favoured with special Divine revelations.

V. They are a royal priesthood.

VI. They are connected with an ancient and sacred lineage.

VII. While of the Israelites as concerning the flesh Christ came, of those whom Paul here describes Christ comes as a gospel and as a revelation to the world.

S. MARTIN, *Rain upon the Mown Grass*, p. 321.

REFERENCES: iii. 3.—*Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 126. iii. 4-7.—*Homilist*, vol. i., p. 40.

Chap. iii., ver. 7.—"What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ."

THE Christian Estimate of Gain and Loss.

The Christian man keeps an accurate account-book; he reckons up with an intelligent and enlightened judgment his gains and his losses. And most important is it that those who would be

Christian men should be rightly informed and rightly minded upon this great question, this question which takes precedence of other questions, inasmuch as it is preliminary and introductory to all.

I. I need not say what answer the world would return to this inquiry, and I need not say what answer the natural heart would return to this inquiry, and I need not say what answer the religion of many persons would return to this inquiry. You will find health entered as a clear gain, and money as a clear gain; comfort, ease, tranquillity of mind and life, prosperity in business, a sufficient and growing income, all these things will be found at once carried to the side of profit, and no hesitation, and no further question asked concerning them. And you will as surely find sickness, disappointment, contraction of the means of pleasure, sorrow, pain, bereavement, entered in the same reckoning as an undoubted and unmixed loss.

II. St. Paul says that for Christ's sake he now accounts as loss all that he had once accounted gain. The reason why he calls his apparent gains a loss is that they had too great a tendency to make him trust in them; to make him look to outward things as his passport to heaven; to make him build on a foundation of his own, and not upon the rock of another's righteousness. What do we know of the thought, Things which were gain to me, these I have accounted for Christ's sake loss? I say it sorrowfully, but with deep truth, that many of us live and die on the strength of a gospel which has no Christ in it, no demolition of self, whether in the form of self-confidence or self-seeking, and no exaltation of Christ upon the ruins of self either as our Saviour or as our Lord.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 183.

Chap. iii., vers. 7 8.

THE Apostle's Ground of Trust.

I. When such general homage is paid to earnestness as in our own time, what wonder if some people should mistake it for religion; and if a man should imagine that because he is zealous in the activities of benevolence, warmly attached to certain Church organisations, and in some measure sympathetic with the spiritual forces which they embody, he is really a partaker of the undefiled religion of the Bible! It is no marvel if a man accustomed to earthly standards of arbitration should imagine that the goodness which has been so cheerfully acknowledged on earth will be as cheerfully acknowledged in

heaven, and that he who has passed muster with the world will not be sent abashed and crestfallen from the judgment-seat of God. You may be early initiated into the ordinances of the Christian Church; you may have come of a long line of spiritually illustrious ancestry; you may give an intellectual assent to the grand harmony of Christian truth; you may be zealous in certain activities of benevolence, and in certain matters connected even with the Church of God itself; and yet you may gain all this world of honour and lose your own soul.

II. Notice the compensating power of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. This compensation runs through creation; it seems to be a radical law both in the physical and spiritual government of God. Trust that Cross for yourselves; take hold of it; it is consecrated. In all circumstances of your history, in all exigencies of your mortal lot, take firm hold of the Cross.

W. M. PUNSHON, *Sermons*, p. 384.

I. Is that man's normal state—loss in order to gain? Certainly not. In God's own case it is not so. Has not God perfect and complete happiness? Was there any amount of loss sustained by Adam in order to gain? Was there any progress dependent upon loss? The idea is an absurdity. It was not so. Then how did it come to pass that loss ever came to be sustained in order to gain? I need scarcely say that all loss in the universe is involved in sin, it is sin that has brought loss, and nothing else, and we all feel it and realise it. We have lost paradise, we have lost the image of God, we have lost our inheritance, we have lost everything, by sin. Then comes the question, Is it the law in regard to a sinful being that there is loss in order to gain? Does the suffering of loss bring gain? I say distinctly not, not as a necessary rule. There may be always loss and no gain. Yet, though loss does not bring gain with it, there never can be gain to a sinner but through loss. A man may suffer loss and have no gain, but no sinner can ever get gain but by suffering loss.

II. Look at the first principle in this matter; look at the Saviour and then at the saved. How was it with Jesus? Did not He suffer loss in order to gain? He must needs suffer, if He is to be a Saviour; He must needs sustain loss; He must lay aside the robe of His glory, He must take our nature upon Him, He must die in that nature, He must suffer the curse of that nature, or He cannot be a Saviour. But He did do it.

Then the gain of salvation was the gain of Christ. And as regards ourselves, whatever stands between the soul and Christ must go, whether it is what the world calls good or bad; whether it is gross immorality or integrity, honesty, and uprightness; whether it is the love of pleasure or of wealth; whether it is the love of wife, husband, or child. The creature must give way to God; if the heart is to be filled with all the precious things of God's salvation in Christ, the creature must give way.

A. MOLYNEUX, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 120.

REFERENCES: iii. 7, 8.—J. Jackson, *Sermons before the University of Oxford*, p. 1; iii. 7-9.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxiii., No. 1357.

Chap. iii., ver. 8.—"I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

I. "THE knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord"; that is, the knowledge of our wants and of the means by which those wants may be most fully satisfied; the knowledge of sin and of salvation. Men's eyes in general are equally closed against both, for as none but Christians have anything like a true notion of their own evil, so also none but Christians look forward with any lively hope to the glory that shall be revealed hereafter. When our Lord was foretelling the state of the world in after-times, He more than once declared to His disciples that His Gospel would only in a small degree overcome the wickedness of the world; He says that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man," that as before the Flood men ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and builded, and thought nothing of God till His judgments burst upon them and destroyed them all, so it should be at the time when the Son of man should be revealed. Now how is it that so many of us are living exactly in the manner which Christ described?

II. Very often after baptism children are suffered to remain in complete ignorance of everything that concerns their salvation. The boy grows into manhood with a confirmed unchristian practice and scarcely any relics of Christian knowledge. And what is the issue? In the ordinary course of things, it is a sinful life and a hopeless death, unless God touches the heart with a sense of its danger, and in His power and mercy brings it to true and effectual conversion. Those who have grown up to youth or manhood without having yet fully embraced the offer of salvation through Christ are called upon to turn to Him

and to believe on Him; and the threatenings addressed to the unconverted sinner are at present all in their full force addressed to them. Remember that he that doeth righteousness is righteous; that he that committeth sin—that is, who is in the habit of carelessly committing it—hath not seen Christ, neither knoweth Him, but is of the devil, who has been a sinner from the beginning.

T. ARNOLD, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 28.

REFERENCES: iii. 8.—J. H. Jellett, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. ix., p. 25; *Homilist*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 68; Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 288.

Chap. iii., vers. 8, 9.—"That I may win Christ and be found in Him."

CHRIST the Only Gain.

Consider—

I. What it is to win Christ. (1) To win Christ is to count Him gain. What is gain to me is what puts me on a right footing with God. This I once thought that my personal qualifications of birth, profession, privilege, attainment, might do; now I see that for such purpose they are useless, and worse than useless. In the view of the end for which I once prized them, I now perceive that Christ is gain. (2) Christ is coveted and sought as gain. Are you so thoroughly in earnest in this matter as not merely to perceive that Christ is gain, but to be honestly anxious to possess this gain? (3) Christ is appropriated as gain. "He that seeketh findeth"; he who seeks Christ, willing just as he is to have Christ just as He is, finds Him, and in finding Christ appropriates Him, and in appropriating Christ feels Him to be gain. It is for this, and nothing short of this, that you are asked to count all things but loss that you may win Christ. (4) You win Christ so as to enjoy Him as gain; you win Him, not as the miser hoards his wealth, to keep it, not as the spendthrift gets his property, to waste it. He is yours for profitable use: for peace, contentment, honour, happiness, and whatever else is comprehended in your standing right with God.

II. To be found in Christ is the fitting sequel of winning Christ; it is the double fruit, the twofold good, of winning Christ. (1) For defence I am to be found in Christ, that I may meet every adversary, that I may silence every answer. I have always to present on every side an impregnable front; I have a righteousness, not my own, but wholly Divine, to plead in every emergency; against every adversary who would assail

or question my standing, I have the Apostle's challenge, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (2) But I am to win Christ, so as to be found in Him, not merely to meet and answer every assault of the accusing adversary, but to meet also and obey the high calling of God in Christ. If I am found in Christ, it is that I may die with Him unto sin, and live with Him unto righteousness and unto God; it is that I may grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; it is that in Him I may go on to perfection.

R. S. CANDLISH, *Sermons*, p. 203.

I. ST. PAUL has consented to the loss of all things; nay, he has transferred to the side of loss in his accounts all that once stood on the side of gain; and if the matter stopped there, we might have pronounced him a bankrupt as much in hope as in possession. But he now says that he is purposed to replace all his cancelled gains by one single item, just one word, just one name, a monosyllable, the name, as some would tell us, of a dead man, the name of One whom rulers and philosophers have agreed in despising and rejecting: "That I may gain Christ." When St. Paul hoped to be able to write the word *Christ* on the side of his receipts, he hoped to enter there the brief summary of inexhaustible treasures, enough to counterbalance the loss of all things and to replace it by an inestimable and incalculable gain.

II. St. Paul's second aim is directed to the great day of judgment: "That I may win Christ and be found in Him." St. Paul had submitted to the loss of all things now, in the hope that he might be safe then. While others shall be found in that day standing, as it were, exposed and defenceless while God's judgments are abroad upon the earth, even like those Egyptians of old who believed not the prediction of the plague of hail and dared its perils in the open field, St. Paul and those who, like him and with him, have believed, will then not be exposed, not be unsheltered; they will be found in Christ. Could any words express more forcibly the safety of the Christian? He will be found enclosed, incorporated, and thus hidden, in Christ Himself, in the Lord, in the Judge of man.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 199.

REFERENCES: iii. 8, 9.—L. Campbell, *Some Aspects of the Christian Ideal*, p. 203; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iii., p. 83.

Chap. iii., vers. 8-11.

THE Cross Borne for us and in us.

I. The whole of the Gospel is the doctrine of the Cross, but that twofold: the cross borne for us and the virtue and power of the Cross by the sacraments communicated to us and henceforth to be borne by us. By baptism we are made members of Him who for us was crucified; and our life from baptism to our death should be a practice of the Cross, a learning to be crucified, a crucifixion of our passions, appetites, desires, wills, until one by one they be all nailed, and we have no will but the will of our Father who is in heaven; and in the prospect of each lesser cross, such as are allotted to us, not merely when laid upon us, and we cannot escape them, we, too, should take up our Master's words, "Not My will, but Thine."

II. The ancient Christians followed this example: they shared each other's sufferings; they suffered one for another, the rich the poverty of the poor; they saw Christ in the poor, the prisoners, the captives, the sick, as He bade them and as He had told them, and underwent sufferings for them; they laid down their lives for the brethren. So then they well understood the two parts of the doctrine of the Cross, the cross which was borne for us by Christ and the cross which was to be borne by us, in Christ's strength and for Christ's sake, and this not for a brighter crown merely, but that they might finally be saved.

III. Every shade of self-denial, from the pettiest denial of our appetites to the martyr's mangled and scored human form, is all included in bearing the cross, the least because He has commanded it, and He, for His own love's sake, accepts it. All crosses are preparations for heaven; for though we know not its unspeakable joys or wherein they consist, this we know: that we must learn to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven, to be like the blessed spirits who do His pleasure, swift and instant as the lightning, to count nothing labour, toil, or cross, which is to do His will. This portion of the cross has a blessed privilege, in that it is *taken* willingly in obedience, not simply *borne* willingly, as the chastisement of disobedience; it is taken in order, in what little way regenerate man is capable of, to be like his Maker; it is taken out of love to Him and to do His commandments.

Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times," vol iii., p. 1.

REFERENCES: iii. 9.—*Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. iv., p. 277; H. W.

Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. iii., p. 90; J. C. Finlayson, *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 342; T. Jones, *Ibid.*, vol. xii., p. 118; T. T. Lynch, *Three Months' Ministry*, p. 97.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"That I may know Him."

I. THE great object of the Christian, the great end and aim of the Christian life, is to know Jesus Christ. There is a great difference between "knowing" a person and "knowing about" a person. Many can give an outline of His history, can repeat some of His sayings, and describe His miracles, but not every one knows Him with a personal knowledge and acquaintance, knows what it is to have spiritual communication with Him, knows what it is to understand Him and to sympathise with Him, even as a man understands and sympathises with a personal and human friend. And it was this knowledge that the Apostle asked for, and it is this that every Christian heart desires: to know the personal Jesus Christ with some degree of intimacy, and to advance and grow in that knowledge day by day under the promised teaching and direction of God the Holy Ghost.

II. This personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ becomes an impossibility so long as our dependence for salvation is upon external observance. St. Paul found it to be so. Whilst he was trusting to ceremonies and to what he considered to be good works for salvation, there was a barrier erected between his soul and God; he had no fellowship with God: and it was not until the barrier was thrown down, it was not until the last obstacle of self-trust and self-dependence was removed, that he came to know "the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom He had sent." There is a broad difference between religiousness and religion. There are people who think that all is right with their souls because they are interested in Christian worship, because they feel profoundly moved by an eloquent sermon. This is "religiousness"; this St. Paul had before his conversion. Religion, as Paul found it afterwards, is something very different from this: it is the surrender of the will to God's will in Christ; it is the suffering Christ so to enter into the soul that every act, every thought and feeling, shall be pervaded by His presence; it is the living for Christ and by Christ.

G. CALTHROP, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 1010.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"The power of His resurrection."

I THINK many must have felt a kind of disappointment in the language of the collect for Easter Day. It begins grandly, as

we suppose an Easter prayer should begin: "Almighty God, who through Thine only-begotten Son hast overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life." But what is there answering to this invocation in the words which form the substance of the petition? They simply ask the almighty God that "as by His special grace preventing us He does put into our minds good desires, so by His continual grace we may bring the same to good effect." Is not this a sudden and painful fall? In moments of strong, highly braced feeling, when we have regarded Easter as offering at once the greatest gift to the universe and the deepest consolation for individual sorrow, have we not been indignant that we are required to utter words which appear to forget both?

I. We dwell upon the fact of Christ's resurrection; upon the evidences which establish it; upon the inferences which may be drawn from it. St. Paul also dwelt upon the fact; it was the very ground of his Gospel to mankind; but fact, evidences, inferences, were all inseparably bound up with the idea which is expressed in the words of the text: "The power of His resurrection." The power or energy which quickened the soul and the body of Jesus Christ, which made it impossible that He should be holden of death, is declared to be the self-same power which works in us who believe, which opens the eyes of our understanding, which reveals to us the hope of our calling. Those who receive the New Testament as a Divine authority cannot shrink from these words; cannot explain them away.

II. Assuredly those who wrote the prayers of which our liturgy is composed did accept it. They connected Easter Eve and Easter Day with Christian baptism; they believed that we are baptised into the death of Christ, that we are buried with Him in baptism, and that we rise to a new life by faith and the operation of God, who raised Him from death; in other words, they looked upon the resurrection-day as the new birthday of the world. And is it then a low and grovelling prayer, unworthy of the Easter season, degrading our thoughts of the victory that has been won for us and for mankind, that He who, by His special grace preventing us, has put into our minds good desires, by His continual help will bring the same to good effect? Could you have a more wonderful, a more practical, test than that which this prayer offers you, and enables you to apply, of the triumph over death, of the opening of the new gate into life? Could any ecstatic language about the state of departed spirits, about the things which eye has not seen nor ear heard,

enable us equally to realise our communion with the one, actually to participate in the other? To be governed by Christ in all the movements of his being, in all his purposes, in all the issues of these movements and purposes—is not this the freedom of the most glorified spirit? To be able to do what one longs to do, our longings being first in accordance with the Divinest mind, prompted by the Divinest inspiration—is not this a good thing beyond the grasp of eye or ear, answering to the desires of the heart, but surpassing them all? And this petition, because His risen life is ours, we are to believe that He will begin to answer at once, will answer completely hereafter.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. vi., p. 1.

THE Power of Christ's Resurrection.

I. The power of the Lord's resurrection is manifested as furnishing the strongest confirmation of the truth of the Gospel.

II. The power of Christ's resurrection is exhibited in the effectual comfort which it affords under sorrow and suffering.

III. The power of Christ's resurrection makes itself felt as an incentive to holiness.

IV. A fourth evidence of the power of Christ's resurrection is found in the comfort which it gives to us when kindred and friends are carried to the world of spirits.

V. Once more, the power of Christ's resurrection furnishes an effectual remedy against the fear of death.

J. N. NORTON, *Golden Truths*, p. 226.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"That I may know . . . the fellowship of His sufferings."

I. THAT is to say, participate in them. Christ, then, did not suffer what He suffered that we might be discharged from suffering it, did not endure certain pains in our stead, that we might escape them; otherwise St. Paul could not have yearned as he did to be admitted to drink of His cup. He sacrificed Himself to put away *sin*, and it is only as sin is put away that suffering can diminish and cease. Our emancipation from it depends upon our emancipation from sin. Pain is symptomatic—symptomatic of the want of conformity to law. Nothing can extirpate it from the world but a reduction of the world's dislocations, which latter is the end and aim of Christ crucified, and not for the sake of our deliverance from the misery of the pain, but because such dislocations are themselves degradation

and shame, and their cure grace, and beauty, and eternal life. Let us be thankful that so long as sin remains untaken away more or less of suffering remains. In our as yet unrightened realm, its pricks are serviceable, and cannot be spared.

II. But then, further, according to the Apostle's view and impression, Christ suffered what He suffered, not that we might be delivered from it, but, on the contrary, that we might be brought into it, that we might come to suffer *with Him.* His advent and presence did indeed *stir up* pains, *new* pains, that had not shaken the sphere of humanity before. The Apostle had no idea that there was virtue or praise in suffering ; that to be scourged was a thing to be aimed at or gloried in. He never courted it, or threw himself in the way of it, that it might come upon him, but he rather took measures to escape it when he could ; yet here he is yearning to know the fellowship of his Lord's sufferings. What, then, does he mean ? He wanted to enter yet more deeply into that spirit of Christ, that spirit of holy love which in an evil world necessarily involves suffering, to have more of His unselfish devotion to the cause of God and man, to feel more with Him the leprosy and disharmony of sin, and to follow Him more closely in His righteous concern with regard to it and His earnest activity against it. It was not the mere anguish he craved, but the grand moral heart, the grand moral sympathies and affections, which the anguish expressed and implied, and which could not be had without it.

III. It will always be but the few who will be found entering abundantly into the fellowship of His sufferings, giving themselves grandly to the cause of God and man ; yet, to know the Lord Jesus at all, we must to some extent feel with Him the pang and burden of His cross. There is no other way of knowing Him, and heaven will not stoop and bend for those who cannot climb, will not lower its price or reduce the terms of admission to let in those who have not wherewith to pay.

S. A. Tipple, *Echoes of Spoken Words*, p. 57.

The word "fellowship" might startle us in this connection. The sufferings are Christ's sufferings, and St. Paul speaks of sharing them—"the sufferings." They did not begin on Calvary ; the death was but the consummation of the life ; His sufferings were of the soul ; the Passion was the Atonement ; the suffering of sufferings was the sin-bearing, the taking upon Himself by a conscious act, possible because He was God, of

the whole loathsome, putrefying mass of a world's sins, so that henceforth they should lose their condemning voice and also their constraining pang against all who, in deep penitence and unswerving faith, draw nigh to God Himself through the blood of Jesus.

I. At first sight we might regard the sufferings of Christ, and especially those last spoken of, as lying beyond the reach of human fellowship or human communion. There is a great comfort, no doubt, for Christian people in being able to regard the trials and discomforts of this life as a real and integral portion of that suffering which Christ Himself undertook and endured below. If it were only of these things, St. Paul might speak of it as a high and holy object to know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.

II. This was certainly not the whole of that fellowship of Christ's sufferings which was St. Paul's aim and object. The clause which follows the text suggests a further meaning: "Being made conformable unto His death." This introduces us into St. Paul's characteristic view of the spiritual life. It is the life of one who died when Christ died, rose when Christ rose, ascended when Christ ascended, and lives now a life, not seen and temporal, but hidden with Christ in God. In this way the fellowship of Christ's sufferings becomes a true sympathy with Christ in His abhorrence and repudiation of sin.

III. The fellowship of Christ's sufferings is not only sympathy with Christ's warfare in destroying our sins, but also a true participation with Christ in the anguish, though not in the virtue, of His sin-bearing for the world. St. Paul shared Christ's yearning over the sin-stained, self-ruined souls of fallen men. There is a vicarious sacrifice still in all who know the fellowship of the sufferings, not to purchase again the purchased possession, but yet to bring the one Ransom and the one Redeemer home to the erring, straying, lost ones, who know not their need or His sufficiency.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Penny Pulpit*, New Series, No. 818.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection."

ST. PAUL, a better man than any of us, had found the hollowness of self-trust. He had willingly consented to part with all that he had once thought most valuable in a religious sense for the sake of knowing Christ and the power of His resurrection.

I. For the sake of knowing Christ. In that knowledge, he was aware, lay his eternal life. The words do not refer to a merely intellectual knowledge of Christ; such knowledge as this Paul might have acquired without parting with his all to gain it. (1) Though the intellectual knowledge of Christ is not the whole or chief part of man's great need, yet it must not be undervalued. We may have it and yet be nothing profited; but, on the other hand, without it the other cannot be. A man must know of Christ by the hearing of the ear, if he would ever know Him for himself by faith. (2) But the knowledge of which St. Paul speaks is a personal knowledge; his acquaintance with Christ (*a*) reconciled him to the painful vicissitudes of outward circumstances (Phil. iv. 11—13); (*b*) brought him help under the emergencies of special danger (2 Tim. iv. 16—18); (*c*) brought him support and comfort amid the special inward trials of his personal life.

II. And the power of His resurrection. The meaning is not so much the power shown in His resurrection, the manifestation of God's almighty strength in raising Christ from the dead, but rather the power with which resurrection invested Christ; the power upon which He entered as the result and consequence of His resurrection; that power which He still exercises throughout heaven and earth as the risen and exalted Saviour. The power of His resurrection might be expressed perhaps more intelligibly in the form, *His resurrection power*. Because He lives, His servants live; the risen life of Jesus is daily manifested in their body.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 213.

Chap. iii., ver. 10.—"That I may know Him . . . and the fellowship of His sufferings."

I. THERE is a fellowship of Christ's sufferings in relation to pain. The pains of life, inward and outward, are as varied as the bodies and souls on which they fasten. Our sensibilities to pain are very various: one thing hurts one person, and another another; that which is agony to me my neighbour scarcely feels. This is true of the roughnesses of life, and it is true of the calumnies of life, and it is true of the disappointments of life; it is true of those trials which come to us through the affections, and it is true of those trials which come to us through the ambitions of our nature. Thus much we may say with certainty: that no man, and therefore no Christian, passes through life untouched by distress. The cause may vary, and

the kind may vary, and the degree may vary, all but infinitely; still the fact is there, the thing is there; the experience must be gained, as alone it can be gained, through suffering; and oftentimes the even tenor of an untroubled life, in its brightest and serenest day, is but the torrent's smoothness ere it dash below. But in all this there is lacking as yet the essential feature of a fellowship in Christ's sufferings. For this faith is needed, and devotion is needed, and submission is needed, and the support of a heavenly arm, and the expectation of a heavenly home.

II. There is a fellowship of Christ's sufferings in relation to sin. As He resisted unto blood, striving against sin, so must we. It is a life-and-death battle for each one of us. We shall never have done with it for long together while life lasts. Sometimes by craft and sometimes by assault, sometimes by ambush, sometimes by feigned flight, sometimes with parade of arms and trumpets, as though secure of intimidation and of triumph, the old enemy attacks again, the old sin rises from its fall, and there is nothing before us yet once more save hard-earned victory or shameful defeat. In the midst of all, let this be our stay: "Greater is He that is with us, than he that is in the world."

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 229.

REFERENCES: iii. 10.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. x., No. 552; *Ibid.*, *Evening by Evening*, p. 329; R. Lorimer, *Bible Studies in Life and Truth*, p. 377; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 226; *Homilist*, 1st series, vol. vii, p. 341; *ibid.*, 3rd series, vol. iii., p. 159; H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvii., p. 282; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. iv., p. 87; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 384; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 240; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 32; Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 339; W. J. Knox-Little, *The Mystery of Suffering*, p. 29; S. Martin, *Sermons*, No. 15.

Chap. iii., vers. 10, 11.

THE Fellowship with Christ's Sufferings.

I. It is manifest that there are senses in which we can have no community with our Lord in His sufferings, in which they were peculiar and His own. For they were meritorious sufferings, whereas we have not, and can never have, merit in God's sight; they were voluntary sufferings, whereas all our sufferings are deserved, being entailed upon us by sin. They were also distinct from ours in degree, as well as in kind. Jesus knew all things which should come upon Him; He saw the whole cup brimming over with woe, and every ingredient of every bitter drop to come was known to Him. This we are

spared. That cup is dealt out to us in drops only; we never know whether we are not close approaching its end. In capacity also for suffering He surpassed us equally. It is a token of God's mercy, as well as of our infirmity, that we are ever benumbed by pain. Beyond a certain point, the anguished eye puts on darkness, the fevered frame subsides into lethargy. But so was it not with Him whom we love. In that long procession of human sorrow of which the world's history, disguise it as we will, is but the record, His mourning has ever been first, and chief, and unapproachable. Look and see whether there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

II. The first point of fellowship with Christ's sufferings is grief for sin, deep, earnest personal affliction for our own guilt and unworthiness. Enter into fellowship with Christ's sufferings, learn to know what sin is, and this very knowledge shall relieve you from the bondage of sin. Begin to grapple with the strong man armed that keepeth thine house within by the aid of that stronger one, who shall help thee at last to bind him and spoil his goods. It may, and it will, cost thee suffering; but is it not worth any present loss if we may live freely, and purely, and blessedly, and die without terror, and fulfil in a higher and perfect state all the best ends of our being in the sinless and everlasting service of Him from whom that being came?

H. Alford, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 160.

Conformity to Christ's Death.

This shaping in the form of Christ's death is one of the Christian's earnest endeavours and most cherished objects in life. No advantage of birth, no distinction of rank, no triumph of intellect, no extending and pervading empire of the will, nothing, in short, that tempts ordinary men of the world, can attract him in comparison with this.

I. Christ's death was a death unto sin; and all conformity to His death must be conformity begun, continued, and completed by death unto sin. Suffering on account of sin is a very different thing from death unto sin. Fellowship with Christ's sufferings—this is the restless, endless conflict of the believer's course, ever raging, ever distracting, ever wearing and wearying him; conformity to Christ's death—this is the deep calm of indifference to sin, and to the solicitations of Satan, and to the allurements of the world, which is ever setting in together with and over against the conflict. This deadness to sin is the

first and most essential element of conformity to the death of Christ.

II. Let us follow out this conformity to His death into some of its attendant circumstances. (1) Sin and the devil will not let us alone in its various stages. The nearer we approach in likeness to Him, the more will His enemies treat us as they treated Him. (2) Again, that death of His was a death to all mere human ambition. In conformity to His death we also must read the death-blow to all other ambition. (3) And, once more, all self-righteousness is sacrificed and nailed to His cross in those who are made in the likeness of His death. (4) Nor should we entirely dismiss such a theme without one look onwards. "If we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him." The Christian should never end with Calvary, nor with the mortification of the body, nor with deadness to sin, but ever carry his thoughts onward to that blessed consummation to which these are the entrance and necessary condition.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 173.

A SERMON for Easter Day.

I. First of all, what is the event itself, the resurrection of Jesus, of which this day is the joyful commemoration? Of whom is the resurrection? Lazarus was raised from the dead by Christ; wherein did Christ's own resurrection differ from that of him whom He loved? In two most important particulars. Lazarus underwent no change from suffering, death-doomed flesh and blood to a body of the resurrection. As he entered the tomb, so he came forth from it. Then, which is closely dependent on this, Lazarus died again. His was in some sense *a* resurrection; but it was no part of *the* resurrection, of which the Lord is the example and firstfruits. For "Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more"; He brought up His body out of the grave changed and glorious, with no more infirmity, no more blight of sin upon it.

II. Need we ask how the resurrection of Christ can extend beyond Himself? If these faithful and careful ones bore into the tomb the dead form of the Son of man, of our collected and concentrated humanity; if there *we* lay with and in Him, watched by ministering angels during that solemn and mysterious pause in the Life of our life, who can tell what happened when that same form was lit up again with the returned spirit, when the Godhead again entered into its fleshly tabernacle, or rather, having taken down its frail and

temporary tent, entered into its new-built and eternal temple, when those lacerated feet began their glorious and onward march of triumph, and those pierced hands unfurled God's banner of everlasting victory? He rose not alone; we, our humanity, in its whole reach and extent, rose with Him. Thus mankind, and the myriads on myriads of whom you and I are units, burst out from that tomb in and with Him, and stood complete in His resurrection. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But this power of His resurrection does not begin to be exerted in the next life; does not then first act when the mute clay bursts out into songs of praise. It is acting all through the Christian's course below, and its action is shown here by the springing up and waxing onward of that new life in His spirit which, expanded and glorified, shall continue its action through eternity.

H. ALFORD, *Quebec Chapel Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 187.

REFERENCES: iii. 11.—G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 114; E. L. Hull, *Sermons*, 1st series, p. 28.

Chap. iii., ver. 12.—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

OUR Christian Aim.

I. Progress is not identical with growth. In speaking of progress, we take account of human endeavour, and not only of Divine law. It is not only that the minute germ appropriates by some mysterious power the elements which it needs, and clothes itself with beauty. The idea of progress suggests thoughts of conscious effort, resolute will, and obstacles vanquished; of the striving after an ideal; of the presence of an animating desire. Progress is not only a movement guided successfully towards a worthy end; it is movement inspired by a worthy motive. Progress must be guided by reflection. According to a memorable Greek saying, "the God of revelation neither hides the truth nor tells it plainly, but shows it by a sign." God does not dispense with the fullest exercise of our faculties; it is by these, and these only, that we can know Him and serve Him.

II. The Christian aim is, briefly, attainment of the likeness of God, for which man was made. There can be no repose or stationariness in the Christian course while life lasts. We cannot continue the feelings, or habits, or methods of one period into another, because, while our aim remains unchanged, we

shall approach it in new ways from each new position. Fresh difficulties and opportunities will be disclosed as we go onwards; we shall gain by the discipline of effort a keener vision and a prompter judgment. The voice of Greek philosophy gave utterance to the last thought of the soul when it proclaimed that the end of man was to be made like to God as far as possible. The end, then, towards which the soul strove, has been brought by Christ within our reach. No life which is directed to self-seeking is easy, and no labour which is spent on transitory objects can bring peace. For us, being of the world, the effort of self-denying service is the one aim to that rest for which we were made, rest on the bosom of God.

BISHOP WESTCOTT, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxiv., p. 104.

REFERENCES: iii. 12.—T. T. Lynch, *Sermons for My Curates*, p. 281; *Homilist*, vol. i., p. 45; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 96. iii. 12-15.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. ii., p. 317; *Ibid.*, vol. xi., p. 394.

Chap. iii., ver. 13.—**"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do: forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, etc."**

I. THE past has its uses. Not for nothing did God bestow upon us memory; not for nothing do His servants recollect themselves, look back, call to mind, remember. (1) We want the past for purposes of humiliation. We might almost content ourselves, if we desired to humble the pride of any one, with saying to him, Let memory work; think of that shameful fall which you had yesterday or the day before: that broken resolution, that outbreak of temper, that irreverent worship, that omitted duty, and that secret sin thought of, not done. I can scarcely see how he can be proud whose memory is not dormant. We must not entirely forget the things that are behind, so far as our past sins are concerned, if we would be humble as we ought to be. (2) Again, we want the past for purposes of admonition and warning. It is thence that we draw experience. A man cannot live out half his days without becoming wise as to his failings and infirmities. If we were in such a sense new men every morning as that the past were a blank and the future a conjecture, we should be far worse equipped than we are for the work and the conflict of the present.

II. But there are two senses in which we ought all to forget the things that are behind. (1) It is possible that upon some the memory of the past may have an elating influence. There

are those who trust too much to a past conversion and look too little to a present consistency. Hear St. Paul utterly disclaiming any such trust; telling how he forgets the things behind, and reaches forth only to the things before; nay, declaring his conviction that he might even preach to others, and yet himself be a castaway. (2) But far commoner is the opposite risk; far more in number are they whom the thought of the past deeply depresses. May it not be said to such persons, Forget the things behind? When the question is of courage or cowardice, of resistance or of flight, then forget the things behind: let past falls be forgotten; let past proofs of weakness be disregarded and dismissed; put your trust in God, and in His name and strength go forward.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 247.

REFERENCES: iii. 13.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, p. 4; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol xx., p. 141; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. iii., p. 237; F. W. Farrar, *In the Days of thy Youth*, pp. 51, 275; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 290; J. H. Jellett, *The Elder Son*, pp. 278, 291.

Chap. iii., vers. 13, 14.

LIVING in the Future.

I. First, we may take this as the advice commended to us in the example here taught us: Live in the future. Our highest condition in this world is not the attainment of perfection, but the recognition of heights above us which are as yet unreached. From generation to generation, for the individual and the species, the condition of our progress is a distance beckoning us, and a feeling that we have not already attained, neither are already perfect.

II. Let the bright, certain, infinite future dwarf for us the narrow and stained past: "forgetting the things that are behind." (1) Forget past failures; they are apt to weaken you. (2) Be sure to forget past attainments; they are apt to become food for complacency, for every vain confidence. (3) Forget your past circumstances, whether they be sorrows or joys; the one are not without remedy, the other not perfect. "Forget the things that are behind."

III. Let hopes for the future and lessons from the past alike lead to strenuous work in the present. "This one thing I do." Be the past what it may, be the future what it may, I know that I cannot reach the one nor forget the other, except by setting myself with all my might and main to present duties, and by reducing all duties to various forms of one great life-purpose.

Concentration of all our strength on a single aim, and that aim pursued through all our days, with their varying occupations—what a grand ideal of life that is! We shall work hard and heartily at various tasks, and yet the good part shall not be taken away from us by outward activity, any more than our possession of it will sequester us from vigorous service of God and man.

A. MACLAREN, *Sermons in Manchester*, 3rd series, p. 39.

THE text shows—

I. The greatness of Christian hope. Two things are suggested by the context as having been actually attained by Paul: a satisfying religious faith and a sufficient religious purpose. (1) He had attained a satisfying religious faith. This is the portion of all believers in the Gospel. In some it appears almost independently of experience; the reason of it is vouchsafed them in their conversion; they will speak, with no consciousness of exaggeration, of being brought out of darkness into marvellous light: in their joyousness they are new creatures. In others it grows and strengthens along the whole course of Christian fidelity; they have a peace which passeth all understanding. But out of this satisfaction there arises a special danger. Satisfaction with an ideal often so contents us that we make no effort to realise it. We have not attained when we have begun to trust. Faith is the means of Christian living, not the end, not the sum, of Christian life. (2) Paul had also attained a sufficient religious purpose. It was characteristic of him, as of all noble natures, that he valued his faith according to the energy with which it filled him, and that he estimated spiritual energy by the sacrifices it enabled him to make. The power of the Gospel is seen in that it not only inspires a Christ-like passion of love and righteousness, but also transforms the passion into purpose. This is the true test of spiritual vigour: the energy of purpose with which we are inspired.

II. The method of Christian endeavour. "Forgetting those things that are behind"—this is one of the conditions of manful Christian endeavour. The habit of brooding over the sins of the past must be laid aside, and also the habit of dwelling on our spiritual attainments. Our only contentment is in aspiration, for our true life and its issues are before us. The bliss of the unperfect is in their efforts after perfection. From the knowledge that we have not attained comes the hope of attaining; nay, rather, it is the hope of larger blessedness which makes all we have yet reached appear incomplete. We have

not yet fathomed the Divine purpose, nor known the fulness of the grace of Christ.

A. MACKENNAL, *The Life of Christian Consecration*, p. 164.

REFERENCES: iii. 13, 14.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xix., No. 1114; G. E. L. Cotton, *Sermons and Addresses in Marlborough College*, p. 341; C. H. Grundy, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. iv., p. 87; H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xvi., p. 210; *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 92; H. P. Liddon, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 257; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 20; J. J. S. Perowne, *Sermons*, p. 104; W. M. Punshon, *Sermons*, p. 26; F. Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 224; F. Case, *Short Practical Sermons*, p. 43. iii. 13-15.—W. Hay Aitken, *Mission Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 236. iii. 14.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 46; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 263; H. S. Hird, *Ibid.*, vol. xv., p. 278.

Chap. iii., vers. 15, 16.—**"And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this to you," etc.**

TOLERATION.

I. In proportion as we really love the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall love those who love Him, be it in never so clumsy or mistaken a fashion, and love those too whom He loved enough to die for them, and whom He lives now to teach and strengthen. We can surely do good together. Together, let our denomination be what it may, we can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, reform the prisoner, humanise the degraded, save yearly the lives of thousands by labouring for the public health, and educate the minds and morals of the masses, though our religious differences force us to part when we begin to talk to them about the world to come.

II. True, there are errors against which we are bound to protest to the uttermost, but how few! The one real enemy we have all to fight is sin, evil-doing. If any man or doctrine makes men worse, makes men do worse deeds, protest then, if you will, and spare not, and shrink not; for sin must be of the devil, whatever else is not. And therefore we are bound to protest against any doctrine which parts man from God, and under whatsoever pretence of reverence or purity, draws again the veil between him and his heavenly Father, and denies him free access to the throne of grace, that he may speak with God face to face and yet live. For this right of access we must protest; for this we must die, if needs be; for if we lose this, we lose all that our reforming forefathers won for us at the stake. Ay, we lose our own souls, for we lose righteousness and strength and the power to do the will of God.

III. Just in proportion as we delight in and live by the great doctrines of Christianity, all controversies will become less and

less important in our eyes. The more we value the living body of Christianity, the less we shall think of its temporary garments; the more we feel the power of God's Spirit, the less scrupulous shall we be about the peculiar form in which He may manifest Himself. Personal trust in Jesus Christ, personal love to Jesus Christ, will keep our minds clear, and sober, and charitable.

C. KINGSLEY, *Sermons for the Times*, p. 278.

REFERENCE: iii. 16.—F. Ferguson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xii., p. 193.

Chap. iii., ver. 18.—**"Many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ."**

THE Cross the Measure of Sin.

How is it that every sin, even the very least, makes men enemies of the Cross of Christ?

I. First, because it was sin that, so to speak, created the Cross: sin made a Redeemer necessary. It opened some deep breach in the order of life and in the unity of God's kingdom which could be no way healed but by the Atonement. If there had been no sin in the world until now, the sin we have committed, each one of us, this day, would have demanded the sacrifice and reconciliation. Such is the intensity of one offence, such its infinity of guilt.

II. And, again, not only does sin both create and multiply this necessity, but, so to speak, it continues to frustrate the work of the Cross and Passion of the Son of God. It demands His death, and it defeats its virtues; it invokes it from the mercies of God, and it wars against it by direct hostility; it first makes it necessary, and then would make it fruitless.

III. And, once more, sin makes men enemies of the Cross, because it is in virtue and spirit a renewal of the Crucifixion; it acts the Crucifixion over again. And therefore our Lord, though He was already in the bliss and glory of the Father, cried saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" It is no mere figure of speech, but a very deep and appalling reality, that sin makes every soul that willingly offends an enemy of the Cross of Christ by converting it into a direct spiritual antagonist of the will and intent of our merciful Lord in the mystery of His Passion. Hence we may see (1) the exceeding sinfulness of every act of wilful sin; (2) the sinfulness of every habitual state or temper of mind contrary to the spirit of our Saviour.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 201.

REFERENCES: iii. 18.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st

series, p. 290; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 93; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3245. iii. 18, 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. ii., No. 102; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 219; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 253. iii. 19.—Wilkinson, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 9; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 250.

Chap. iii., vers. 19, 20.—"Who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven."

I. Others, says St. Paul, have their mind set upon things below; appetite is their god; they make the Gospel itself a means of worldly gain; what they pride themselves upon is just what a Christian should be ashamed of; and the end of these things is death. When the world perishes, its children and its subjects must perish too. But we are not of the world. Already, even in this life, our citizenship is in heaven; and thither is our eye ever turned, in expectation of His coming who is even now our King, and shall one day be our Deliverer and our Saviour too.

II. If anything for a moment shows us to ourselves as we are, stripping off the disguise by which we commonly impose not upon others only, but also upon ourselves, does anything strike us so painfully as this one conviction?—that we are predominantly earthly-minded; that, whatever else we may be or may not be, we have things on the earth for our thought and for our feeling. There is a quietude and a self-complacency in worldly success which puts us, as it were, in good humour with both worlds: with God above and man below. But take one world away, and what has become of the other? It is a mistake to suppose that affliction, in any form, drives men to God. It may in time, with pain and prayer and many struggles, make the heavenly-minded man more heavenly-minded; but it might almost be said to have an opposite effect upon the godless and the earthly-minded, at once showing him his state and fixing that state upon him. Depend upon it, he, and he only, who has a country above will ever sit loose to interests below; and if he would ever escape the terrible condemnation of having minded earthly things, it must be because God, in His infinite mercy, has given us the comfort and joy of being able to say from the heart, My home is not here; my citizenship is in heaven.

C. J. Vaughan, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 263.

Chap. iii., ver. 20.—"For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

Heaven the Christian's Home.

I. "Our conversation is in heaven." Many are the meanings of this word, and every way the Apostle says we are in heaven.

For the word, in the language in which God wrote it, means the city or state to which we belong, or citizenship, or the rules and order of a state by which it is governed, or the way of life of the citizens; and in all these ways he places us in heaven. Our home is in heaven. Yet so it might be, so in one sense it is, though we were away from home. For, as the Apostle says, "while we are present in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Yet it is not altogether an absent home of which the Apostle speaks. He speaks not of our home as something separate from us, not as something in space in which we might be and are not, but as something belonging to us, and to which we belong, to which of right and in fact we belong. For the temple of God, the Church, is not made with hands, not a material building. One Church we know it is of all who are, or have been, or shall be in Christ Jesus, all, wherever they are, in heaven or in earth, all, men and angels, knit in one in Him. In soul and spirit we are in heaven already. There our life centres; there we live: to it we belong.

II. But how then if on earth, as we know we are, as the corruptible body presseth down the spirit, is our citizenship, our dwelling-place, yea we ourselves, in heaven? Because our Lord is there. This is the great blessedness of our citizenship, as of every other gift of grace or glory: that we have it not of ourselves, but of and in Christ.

E. B. PUSEY, *Sermons from Advent to Whitsuntide*, vol. i., p. 328.

OUR Heavenly Citizenship.

I. There are only three ways on record by which any man ever became a citizen of any state; but not by one only, but by all the three, are we citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. (1) For, first, we were made citizens by purchase. He who was the King of that beautiful city did actually give up for a season His kingdom, and He was content to become a stranger here, and to forfeit all His dignities, and to be human enough to die and to be buried, that He might by that absence and death buy an admission for you and me to that heavenly city. (2) And, in addition to this purchase by the blood of Christ, it was free for us to take as a gift. (3) And because birth is better than purchase or gift, therefore by the same grace we are born again, that we should change the place of our nativity and have our settlement no longer in a slavish world, but be born free; and this admission by birth is that which lies in the text: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

II. Look, next, at the privileges of citizenship. (1) It is the first privilege of every citizen that he is represented. Accordingly it is the plan of God's great government that every one who belongs to His Church is represented. Christ is gone into heaven for this purpose, and there at God's right hand He stands. (2) And the right of a citizen is that he is under the laws of his own state, and no other; he may appeal up to this. The Christian is continually appealing to a grander award than that of this world. (3) The citizen can go in and out. Is he not free of his own state? But it is a holy liberty. There is the same God to all there in the city; He is very near. (4) It is the right or privilege of all citizens to go to the presence of the King. Whatever be their petitions, the access is open. We carry in our hands a white stone, with a new name written; we command entrance by that stone, the proof of our union with Christ. We are His people, and His whole empire is pledged to us; and we may be in that royal presence night and day, and enjoy such elevation and such converse and partake of such favours as it passeth the natural eye to see: "but God has revealed them to us by His Spirit."

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 233.

REFERENCES: iii. 20.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. viii., No. 476; H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *Waterside Mission Sermons*, p. 27; *Ibid.*, *The Life of Duty*, vol. ii., p. 197; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 25; vol. xxii., p. 109; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. iv., p. 218; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vi., p. 215.

Chap. iii., vers. 20, 21.

THE Reunion of the Saints.

I. "The body of our humiliation." What a word is that! It was not always thus. When God, in the solemn conclave of the Eternal Trinity, said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness," He could not have been speaking only of man's soul. The record of the Creation which follows is almost entirely corporeal. He must have been speaking of the entire man. In the likeness of Christ's body, God formed the body of Adam, not in the likeness of Christ's body as He wore it down upon this earth, but the likeness of that body as it is now, as He ascended into the heavens, the body glorified, so that in all probability the body of our first parents in paradise was the very same body as we shall receive after the resurrection, both being in the likeness of Christ and both glorious. And this is, therefore, one of the points in the fulness of the restitution of

all things, and shows how we regain in Christ all, even to the exact bodily form—all that we lost in the Fall.

II. The resurrection body will be a body which we shall glory in, just as in this body we now are humiliated. So the one becomes in some sense a measure of the other; and such as is the degradation of the body now, so will be the exaltation of the body then. For it will be the memorial through all eternity, not of a fall, but of the grace which has raised us to an elevation higher than that from which we fell. Christ will be both admired and reflected in it before the universe. Continually, without cessation, it will be capable of worship and service; and, like Him it mirrors, it will express transparently the whole of the intellect and the love breathed in it, and, like Him, it will never change. A beauty which we see each in the other will never fade away from before our eyes; the satisfaction which we never found in a creature we shall find absolutely and for ever in that new creation: and from the moment of our waking up in that blessed morning, on and on, for ever and ever, the gushing sense of light, and life, and power, and service, and purity, and humility, and love will flow, ever full and ever fresh, out of the freeness of the fountain of the indwelling of God.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 4th series, p. 225.

THE Heavenly Citizenship.

St. Paul had just been speaking of some members of the Church whose god was their belly, who minded earthly things. It is a plausible opinion that in the text he intended to contrast with their state of mind his own and that of the persons who strove to imitate him as he imitated Christ. Our translators probably adopted that notion, or they would scarcely have rendered πολίτευμα by conversation. That word had undoubtedly a more extensive signification in the seventeenth century than it has in ours: it included the whole course and habit of life, and had no special reference to intercourse through the tongue. But it can never have denoted what a word derived from "city" and "citizen" does most naturally denote: a condition and privilege which belonged to certain men, whether they made use of it or forgot it.

I. That natural sense, I apprehend, St. Paul gives to the expression here. He does not contrast *his* heavenly temper with the earthly temper of those concerning whom he speaks with so much sorrow; but he blames them for that temper

because he and they had both alike a Divine πολίτευμα, because a state had been claimed for them and was implied in their acts with which such a temper was wholly at variance. The opposition is not between them and him; it is between them and themselves. It is not, again (as we sometimes state it), between them and their professions, as if they boasted of a high citizenship when, in fact, they were only aliens. They had too low, not too high, an appreciation of their status and of their rights; they would be raised above their grovelling tendencies, yea and above the conceit which no doubt accompanied these tendencies, if they could once really understand what they were: what honours and estates were legally theirs, only waiting to be claimed; under what title these honours and estates were to be held.

II. To say, "Our *conversation* is in the heavens," would be a bold thing for most of us; but when we say, "Our *citizenship* is in the heavens," then need we no faltering of the tongue, no timidity in the spirit within. That is declaring God to be true, and us to be liars; that is affirming He has not made our lives to be insincere in solitude or in society, our friendships to be poor in quality and to be shorter than the existence which they glorify. All that is fragile and transitory belongs to us; we have failed to recognise the stamp of His eternity which He has assuredly put upon us and upon all our human attachments. We sever by our sin and unbelief links which He has fastened; our noise has disturbed the great deep of memory which His Spirit broods over; but His blessed order stands firm, however little we abide in it. The affinities in the world of human beings, like the affinities in the natural world, have all been constituted by Him, are all maintained by Him. The unity between the different parts of the frame of man is not so mysterious as the unity between the different members of the body politic. The latter is certainly indestructible, whatever may happen to the former, and this because our polity is in the heavens. We are made one in Christ.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons*, vol. i., p. 235.

THERE are here two practical motives by which the Apostle urges the Philippians to walk so as they have true Christian teachers for an ensample: the energy and loyalty and the inspiration of hope.

I. The energy and loyalty. Loyalty is reverence for law, not mere submission to it, but the glad, free submission which

comes from respect for the law and homage for the authority on which it rests. A man may be obedient to his country's laws from fear of punishment. Not out of any regard for right, but because of the constable and the gaol, he may keep within the bounds of law. The loyal man will not think much of a penalty to be escaped; he honours the principle of law; because it is just and good, he will submit himself to it. You see how loyalty to heaven affected Paul. It was pain to him that there were Christians who were unmindful of their heavenly character. To him the Christian name was something to be regarded with reverence and preserved spotless. The honour of the heavenly citizen is the strong motive by which he appeals to his loved disciples at Philippi. Loyalty to a higher order is an energy to resist degrading circumstances or strong temptation. It is so when the influence is historic only or ideal. St. Paul is putting the Christians on their honour. You are citizens of heaven, and your citizenship abides there. It is a real thing, this heavenly law. You are called by the Christian name; you have felt the Christian consolation; you claim the Christian privilege; you are also under Christian allegiance; the Christian life is the life to which you are bidden, which you are trusted to live.

II. The inspiration and hope. Our body is indeed a body of humiliation; we must have it changed before we can be set free: but we shall be free. He who can subdue all things to Him has energy for our deliverance, and we await His delivering advent; we struggle on, faithful, loyal to Him; and He by the energy with which He is able even to subdue all things unto Him will change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory.

A. MACKENNAL, *Christ's Healing Touch*, p. 250.

THE Redemption of the Body.

I. St. Paul valued his privilege of being a citizen of the greatest city upon earth. The Philippians had reason to know that he valued it. He had made them understand by his conduct that citizenship is a great and honourable thing. Men are bound together as citizens of a city, as members of a nation, by God Himself. But St. Paul tells the Philippians that he was the citizen of another country too: "Our citizenship is in heaven." We have friends and fellow-sufferers upon earth; our work is upon earth; we live to do good to the earth; but our home is with God. He has bought us at a great price that we might be freemen of His kingdom, and might always fly to

Him and plead our cause before Him; He has made for us a new and living way into His presence through the flesh and blood of His Son; and we have a right to walk in that way, and not to be taking the downward way, the way of death.

II. St. Paul had the greatest reverence for his own body and for the bodies of his fellow-creatures that any man could have. For he believed that the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour, had taken a body such as ours, and had eaten earthly food, and had drunk of earthly water and wine, and had given that body to die upon the cross, and had raised it out of the grave, and had ascended with it to the right hand of His Father. Therefore when St. Paul recollected his citizenship in heaven, when he claimed to be a member of Christ's body and prayed in His name to His Father and our Father, he could not but think how this body, which is so curiously and wonderfully made, has a hidden glory in it, which, when Christ appears in His glory, shall be fully made manifest. Everything seems to be threatening it with death, but Christ, in whom is the fulness of life, has overcome death and is stronger than death. He has raised up my spirit, that was sinking lower and lower, to trust in Him and hope in Him; He will raise up this body too. Nothing shall be lost of all that God has given us, for Christ has redeemed it. Only death and corruption shall perish, for they have assaulted God's glorious handiwork. What God has created God will preserve.

F. D. MAURICE, *Sermons in Country Churches*, p. 72.

CHRISTIAN Citizenship.

I. Consider, first, the source of Christian citizenship. At the time these words were written, the Roman empire had attained the culmination of its power. The long clamour of battle was hushed in the reign of Augustus. The Emperor seemed to reign over a consolidated and prosperous empire; and through each subject province or far-off archipelago of isles the man who could say, "I am a Roman citizen," found in the words the surest talisman of safety or the speediest redress for wrong. The source of our heavenly citizenship is not, as in the Roman, by birth or by servitude; it can only be by redemption, purchased for us by One who loves us, who can pay the satisfying price, and can exert the needed power; and this is the marvel of love which has really been wrought on our behalf.

II. That the citizenship thus conferred upon us by the free

love of Jesus entails duties upon all its possessors is a consequence which each Christian heart will be prepared very cheerfully to recognise, as indeed it follows from every principle of right. Those whom a state protects and advances owe to it loyalty and patriotism, and if they fail in the discharge of duty, they forfeit all claim upon privilege; those who have received the heavenly citizenship and carefully obey the laws and steadily watch over the interests of the kingdom to which they belong —theirs will be neither stinted obedience nor intermittent devotion.

III. For true-hearted citizens there is abundant consolation in the immunities to which their citizenship entitles them. (1) They have a claim to the protection of the state in all circumstances of difficulty or need; (2) they have a claim also upon the privileges of the city to which they belong: theirs are its security and its freedom, its wealth, its treasure, and its renown. All the treasures of heaven are yours, "for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

W. M. PUNSHON, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 333.

REFERENCES: iii. 20, 21.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xvii., No. 973; E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, p. 105; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 293; *Homilist*, vol. vi., p. 59; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ix., p. 228. iii. 21.—*Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. ii., p. 213; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. iv., p. 289.

Chap. iv., ver. 1 (with 1 Tim. vi. 12).—"Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. Lay hold on eternal life."

FROM the soul's supreme object comes her supreme inspiration.

I. We do not ask you to stand fast in anything that is partial, limited, or temporary. "Stand fast in the Lord." "Lay hold on eternal life," which is nowhere save in the eternal unity of powers, which is, and was, and for ever shall be, the Lord. As we might expect, the Gospel of the Lord and the Gospel of the sky are in perfect harmony. Astronomy is the word of God, and the New Testament is a mirror of astronomy's higher meaning. It was not only at the point of the sun's return from his deepest absence and at astronomical midnight that Jesus was born; but His birth was also the turning point of earth's moral cold and moral darkness. The sun of nature and the sun of our souls were coming anew into our world, and were coming together. Lay hold on His eternal life. His eternal life is your eternal life; His form is the ideal of your form, and capable of transmuting your form.

II. The eternal life often flashes on us, touches us to the quick, talks with us; but much more than this is necessary, if it is to create us anew. We must ourselves lay hold on it. We do our very utmost to maintain our hold on mortal life, not because it is mortal, but because it is life. The eternal life visits all men's souls, but all men's souls do not take hold, and therefore they are not changed, not glorified.

III. A word must be said to beginners. who are perhaps doubtful whether they have any hold at all on the eternal life. Persevere, and your new nature will grow, and with growth its appetite will increase. Remember, it is a form of your nature which can never undergo disintegration. You may undergo a thousand deaths before you attain to it, but when once the Lord's form of humanity is evolved about you as your own form, you can die no more.

J. PULSFORD, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 137.

REFERENCES: iv. 1.—Talmage, *Old Wells Dug Out*, p. 340; E. Lawrence, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxvi., p. 395. iv. 1-4.—H. Quick, *Ibid.*, vol. ii., p. 312. iv. 2.—Phillips Brooks, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 353. iv. 3.—R. D. B. Rawnsley, *Village Sermons*, 1st series, p. 40.

Chap. iv., vers. 3, 4.

ONE Spirit and One Body.

I. This measureless body, spread out before our eyes in vast outline, so varied, so glorious, so wonderful, is convincement enough of the wealth and grandeur of the Spirit whose body it is, whose manifestation it is. It is God revealing Himself to the eyes of our flesh. The whole body is as full of soul for our souls, as of glory for our eyes. There is soul in the sun, and the earth is full of the same soul. In the beast world, the bird world, the tree world, the flower world, the one soul is present, and revealing Himself. "There is one body and one Spirit."

II. Endeavour to keep the unity of both, that you may come to wisdom. If you break up the unity and begin to analyse, you may have little bits of knowledge, but no wisdom, fragments of this and fragments of the other, but no philosophy, no apprehension of the order of God. Sacredly keep the unity of every material form, for its life, its Divineness, depends on its holiness. If you want to get at the unity of the Spirit, do not desecrate the unity of any body in which the Spirit dwells. Respect the unity of your own body, and do your utmost to

keep its unity, for directly it loses its symmetry and balance your health is gone, and your life is in danger.

III. Man is the miracle of the universe, a little unity of body and spirit, representing the great unity of the one body's nature and of the one Spirit, God. Man is the epitome of all wonders, the looking-glass of the universe, the house of God's incarnation. Reflect why Jesus is Lord: He is not Lord because He is called Lord; He is Lord because the great, mute body of the universe is unified in Him. The humanity of Christ found the secret path through death to heaven, because the unity of the Spirit was in Him. It is in virtue of His secret inmost essence likewise that He opens every secret door in man, touches the most secret springs, and remakes the soul. He is the Divine reconciliation of all things; therefore He is creation's peace and our peace.

J. PULSFORD, *Our Deathless Hope*, p. 21.

Chap. iv., ver. 4.—"Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice."

CHRISTIAN Cheerfulness.

I. We can hardly appreciate the full instruction to be drawn from these words unless we remember St. Paul's condition when he wrote his epistle to the Philippians. He was a prisoner at Rome, and his life hung on the caprice of the insane tyrant who then occupied the imperial throne; his circumstances were so dreary, so comfortless, so hopeless, that, except for his brethren's sake, he desired earnestly that death might release him from his anxiety and sorrow. Yet he was so wonderfully supported by consolation in Christ, comfort of love, and fellowship of the Spirit that the burden of his exhortations to distant friends, from whom he was thus cruelly separated, was that they should rejoice in the Lord.

II. We learn then generally from the Apostle's emphatic and repeated exhortations that God intends His people to be habitually cheerful and happy. (1) Note the limitation to this cheerfulness. We are to rejoice *in the Lord*. There are some kinds of joy which would separate us from Christ. (2) Joy in the Lord must be a real practical principle, influencing all our habits and the whole regulation of our conduct. The signs and consequences of our privilege are three: (*a*) forbearance for others, (*b*) freedom from anxiety for ourselves, and (*c*) communion with God by prayer.

III. The precept, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," teaches us that manly cheerfulness is characteristic of the true Christian, and

that this is alike remote from selfish inactivity and overcareful anxiety. This is the spirit in which each of us should go forth day by day to the work to which God has called him, and should carry it on in trustful prayer, in faith and hope and love.

G. E. L. COTTON, *Sermons on the Epistles*, vol. i., p. 40.

I. WHO would care for any gain or loss to-day, if he knew for certain that Christ would show Himself to-morrow? No one. The true Christian feels as he would feel did he know for certain that Christ would be here to-morrow. For he knows for certain that at least Christ will come to him when he dies; faith anticipates his death and makes it just as if that distant day, if it be distant, were past and over. It is very plain that matters which agitate us extremely now will a year hence not interest us at all. So will it be with all human hopes, fears, pleasures, pains, jealousies, disappointments, successes, when the last day is come. They will have no life in them; they will be as the faded flowers of a banquet, which do but mock us. What this world will be understood by all to be then, such is it felt to be by the Christian now. He looks at things as he will then look at them, with an uninterested and dispassionate eye, and is neither pained much nor pleased much at the accidents of life, because they are accidents.

II. Another part of the character under review is what our translation calls moderation: "Let your moderation be known unto all men," or, as it may be more exactly rendered, your consideration, fairness, or equitableness. The Christian does not fear; fear it is that makes men bigots, tyrants, and zealots; but for the Christian it is his privilege, as he is beyond hopes and fears, suspense and jealousy, so also to be patient, cool, discriminating, and impartial, so much so that this very fairness marks his character in the eyes of the world, is "known unto all men."

III. Joy and gladness are also characteristic of him, according to the exhortation of the text, "Rejoice in the Lord alway." The duty of fearing does but perfect our joy; that joy alone is true Christian joy which is informed and quickened by fear and made thereby sober and reverent.

J. H. NEWMAN, *Parochial and Plain Sermons*, vol. v., p. 58.

REFERENCES: iv. 4.—H. J. Wilmot-Buxton, *The Life of Duty*, vol. i., p. 24; H. P. Liddon, *Advent Sermons*, vol. i., p. 283; C. Kingsley, *Town and Country Sermons*, p. 394; H. P. Liddon, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 401; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*,

vol xii., p. 147; Colborne, *Ibid.*, vol. xvi., p. 382; J. Baldwin Brown, *Ibid.*, vol. xvii., p. 129; A. P. Stanley, *Ibid.*, vol. xxi., p. 19; F. Case, *Short Practical Sermons*, p. 94; E. C. Wickham, *Wellington College Sermons*, p. 1.

Chap. iv., vers. 4-6.

A Life of Prayer a Life of Peace.

St. Paul in these words bids the Christians of Philippi to carry all their sorrows and fears to the throne of Christ. He specially bids them remember the nearness of our Lord and the freedom we may use in speaking to Him; and in so doing he has taught us a great and blessed truth, needful for all men in all ages; I mean that a life of prayer is a life of peace.

I. St. Paul here tells us, first of all, that there is One ever near us who can fulfil all our desire and overrule all things in our behalf: "The Lord is at hand." How soon He may reveal Himself in person we know not; but, soon or late, it is certain that, although unseen, He is ever near us. His presence departed not from the Church when He ascended into heaven. He is withdrawn from the eyes of our flesh, but in the sight of our hearts He is always visible; though He be at the right hand of God, yet He is in the Church and in our secret chamber; He is both able and willing to fulfil all our hearts' desires, and nothing is hid from His sight.

II. St. Paul tells us further that we may make all our desires known unto God; we may speak with Him as a man speaks with his friend. We all know the relief of unburdening ourselves and opening our hidden cares even to an earthly companion; we seem to have laid off a weight when we have told our sorrow: and yet there is a point beyond which we do not reveal ourselves to our fastest and nearest friend. But from God not only is it impossible to conceal, but we do not desire to hide, anything. Though He be the Holy One, and His eyes as a flame of fire, so piercing and so pure, yet we do not shrink from making all known to Him, for though He be perfect in purity, He is likewise perfect in compassion; He is as pitiful as He is holy. Though unworthy to ask the least blessing, yet we may make our requests known unto Him by silent humiliation and by secret appeal to His perfect knowledge. We shall not indeed always have what we ask; but if we ask in faith, we shall always have peace. Of this we shall never fail—(1) first, because whatsoever we ask which is truly for our good, that He will give us freely. No father so much delights to give the very thing his children ask for, as our

Father in heaven. Whatsoever we desire that is in harmony with the eternal will, with the love of our Redeemer, and with the mind of the Holy Ghost—those things we shall without fail receive. All good things, all good, eternal and created, all blessing, grace, and truth, all the benedictions of the kingdom of God, all the promises of the Gospel, and all the pledged mercies of redemption—all these we may ask importunately, and shall assuredly receive. (2) Whatsoever we ask that is not for our good, He will keep it back from us. In this entangled twilight state of probation, where the confines of good and ill so nearly approach and almost seem to intermingle, there needs a keen and strong spiritual eye to discern and know the nature and properties of all things which encompass us about. How awful would be our lot if our wishes should straightway pass into realities. (3) We know certainly that if God refuse us anything, it is only to give us something better.

H. E. MANNING, *Sermons*, vol. iii., p. 240.

REFERENCES: iv. 4-7.—E. Blencowe, *Plain Sermons to a Country Congregation*, vol. ii., p. 57; J. Carr, *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 13.

Chap. iv., ver. 5.—**"Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand."**

THE Great Expectation.

I. It has been the expectation of the coming of the Lord which ever since the time of the Apostles has always been the inspiration of the Christian world. The noblest souls always have believed that humanity was capable of containing, and was sure sooner or later to receive, a larger and deeper infusion of Divinity. The power of any life lies in its expectancy. What do you hope for? What do you expect? The answer to these questions is the measure of the degree in which a man is living. He who can answer these questions by the declaration, I am expecting a higher, deeper, more pervading, mastery of Christ—we know that he is thoroughly alive.

II. The more varied and manifold a man's experiences have become, the more he has the chance to know of God, the more chance God has to show Himself to him. Every new experience is like an opportunity of knowing God; every experience is like a jewel set into the texture of our lives, on which God shines and makes interpretation and revelation of Himself. And the man who feels himself going out of a dying year with these jewels of experience which have burned forth from his

life during its months, and knows that God in the new year will shine upon them and reveal them, may well go full of expectation, saying, "The Lord is at hand." There are two ways in which the Lord is always coming to His servants. He opens their eyes to see how near He is already, and He does actually draw nearer to their lives.

III. In the text St. Paul describes what ought to be the result of this expectation of the coming of the Lord upon a man's life: "Let your moderation be known unto all men." This word "moderation"—"forbearance" the new version renders it—is one of Paul's great words; it means self-restraint, self-possession. There is somewhere in the human mind an image of human character in which all wayward impulses are restrained, not by outside compulsion, but by the firm grasp of a power which holds everything in obedience from within by the central purpose of the life. It is this character which St. Paul calls by his great word "moderation." It is self-possession; it is the self found and possessed in God; it is the sweet reasonableness which was in Jesus, of whom it was written that He should not strive nor cry, neither should His voice be heard in the streets: that He should not break the bruised reed, and the smoking flax He should not quench, until He sent forth judgment to victory. In these words we have the true description of what St. Paul meant by moderation.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *Twenty Sermons*, p. 353.

REFERENCES: iv. 5.—*Church of England Pulpit*, vol. xix., p. 157; *Homilist*, 3rd series, vol. v., p. 53; *Ibid.*, 4th series, vol. i., p. 34; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. xii., p. 278.

Chap. iv., vers. 5, 6.—"The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing."

I. IT is not easy to determine in which of two senses the former clause is to be taken. The Lord is near in position, and the Lord is near in approach. In either sense we can connect the doctrine and the precept. If the Lord is soon coming, how idle must be all anxiety about things soon to be dissolved; if the Lord is always present, how needless must be all anxiety about things easy of remedy. The two thoughts fall into one. But it is with the latter of the two that I desire to occupy you now. The Lord Jesus Christ is always at hand; therefore turn all anxiety into prayer. Thousands of hearts have found repose in this one word of inspiration. Towards some verses we cannot but feel as we do towards a place ennobled or consecrated by the footsteps of saints or heroes.

Such verses have a history as well as a doctrine, and is not this one of them? The Lord is ever near, not more in the approach of His advent, than in the reality of His spiritual power. Wherever, in perfect solitude or amidst the din of uncongenial sounds, one humble heart turns to Him as the Saviour and the Intercessor, there is He, not to be sought far and found late, but listening before speech, answering before entreaty. Whatever we be, He changes not; if we doubt His presence, we disparage His power, we deny His Divinity.

II. Be anxious about nothing. Anxiety is (1) an idle thing: (2) an enfeebling thing; it eats the very life out of the energies; it leaves the man, not only where he was, but ten times less capable and less vigorous than at the beginning: (3) an irritating thing; it ruffles the temper; it upsets the balance of the spirit; it is the sure source of moodiness, and sharpness, and petulance, and anger; it sets a man at war with himself, with his neighbour, with God's providence and God's appointments. Anxiety is a sign of mistrust; a sign of feeble faith, of flagging energy, and languid obedience. In Christ's presence, in His human soul, in His compassionate heart, we may lay aside our anxieties, we may rest from our burdens, and we may take refuge from our fears and from our sins.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 279.

Chap. iv., ver. 6.—"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God."

I. "LET your requests be made known unto God." (1) Requests. All creatures are dependent. The act of breathing seems the emblem at once of the creature's continual need and the Creator's abundant supply. With us there is emptiness: with Him there is fulness; and, as in the case of breathing, the emptiness of the creature draws supply from God. His goodness has compassed us about like the atmosphere, and when we open our mouth it is filled with good. (2) "Let your requests be made known *unto God*." God desires company among His creatures; He made an intelligent being that He might have intercourse with the work of His own hands. (3) "*Your* requests." Search and see what element it is in the requests of his little child that goes like an arrow to a parent's heart, filling that heart with delight and opening sluices for a flood of gifts; it is this: that they are the requests of his own child.

II. "By prayer and supplication with thanksgiving." Prayer is the soul's believing and reverential approach unto God; supplication means the needs which demand supply or the asking which springs from a sense of emptiness.

III. "In everything." He is not a man of little faith who puts little things into his prayers. That very thing shows him to be a man of great faith. Prayer in secret is a pouring out of the soul before God; and if it is not a pouring, it is not prayer. Anything left behind, cherished in you but concealed from God, vitiates all.

W. ARNOT, *The Anchor of the Soul*, p. 82

THE Ideal Manhood.

I. This is a command given by one of the ablest professors in the school of Christ. There is a luminousness, and a joyfulness, and a habitual thanksgiving in Paul's life, which contrast very strangely with the outward facts and conditions of that life. He was a prisoner; he was a man advanced in life; he was singularly proud by nature; he was sensitive to a degree that no Æolian harp ever was, for no wind, either loud or low, ever touched him that every sympathy in him did not sound out; and he had been subjected to every indignity of body and soul that a man could undergo. And yet, in other words, he says, Let your disposition be such that you shall see so many things to give thanks for that whenever you have occasion to ask for anything you shall do it through the radiant atmosphere of thanksgiving for all the mercies by which you are surrounded.

II. This is the ideal which a man who comes into the Christian communion sets before himself: a higher, a perfected manhood, which makes him superior to other men. To every intelligent person the first steps on becoming a Christian are steps that lead towards the realisation of the conception of the power of a manhood that has been illumined by the Divine Spirit of God and made superior to the body and to the whole outward life, and that makes a man a prince, who is able to govern both himself and others. The first steps that a man takes in a religious life are ranked, not by external circumstances and conditions, but by the ideal which he is seeking to reach. They are the first steps in that education which is by-and-by to give him control over his own being and over his surroundings. Is there anything in this world more fit to be the object of any man's ambition than the attainment by his reason and moral sense of

such an absolute power by which he can control all the conditions of his life and every part of himself? Is there anything nobler than that?

H. W. BEECHER, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 313.

REFERENCES: iv. 6.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxv., No. 1469; *Church of England Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 103; *Homilist*, vol. iv., p. 302; T. R. Stevenson, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiv., p. 382; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 215; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 74.

Chap. iv., vers. 6, 7.

THE Peace of God and what Hinders it.

The Apostle speaks of certain things which hinder the ideal peace, and the practical thing for us is to understand these hindrances and remove them.

I. The evil that he would prohibit is care—over-anxiety about the things of life. The care condemned is an over-anxious solicitude about material things; a restless, wearing, fretting anxiety, that cannot let us do our best, and then leave issues in the hands of God's providence. Exercises of faith are more easy in spiritual things than they are in temporal things. The slightest derangement of our business plans, the least check in our business prosperity, is often too much for our faith. We give way to despondency; every experience seems a presage of evil, every road tangled and rough; we receive no gift of God with joy, we offer no prayer with thanksgiving; we fret ourselves, and perhaps charge God foolishly.

II. There are things that we have no right to care about at all, things of sheer envy and covetousness. How our cares would be lessened were they limited to things fairly belonging to us. They, too, who are always foreboding evil, always looking on the dark side of things, and if there be a disastrous possibility anticipate it, make cares for themselves. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Every anxiety about duty has its limits, overpassing which it becomes a disqualifying burden, presses down the springs of action, and disables the judgment. I may be so afraid of doing wrong that I never do right.

III. It is difficult to distinguish between the measure of legitimate desire which is right and the excess of it, which is wrong. Two or three suggestions may help us. The legitimate measure of even lawful care is exceeded when religious trust in God is disabled; when our spirit is so disquieted and absorbed that we cannot pray, save in the utterances of

imperious desires; when the care intrudes at all times and overpowers all feelings, so that we absolutely cannot leave the issue with God. Undue care is one of the most inveterate forms of unbelief. It wears out physical energies, takes the vital spirit out of a man; instead of a sound mind in a healthy body, he has to contend with a disordered mind in a body nervously unstrung; he can neither work by day nor sleep by night; full of morbid activity, he does nothing; his over-anxiety has defeated itself.

IV. How is this great hindrance to peace to be counteracted? The strong man armed can be cast out only by a stronger than he; we cannot cast out the evil spirit and leave an empty heart—swept and garnished. Natural human feeling must have something whereon to rest. It rests upon its misfortune and fear; the true remedy is to rest on God. Pray, and the peace of God shall guard your heart and mind.

H. ALLON, *The Indwelling Christ*, p. 107.

REFERENCE: iv. 6, 7.—J. Fleming, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xiii., p. 145.

Chap. iv., ver. 7.—"The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

THE Peace of God.

Let us consider the two ideas suggested by the statement that this peace is the peace of God, and that it passeth all understanding; that is, we propose looking at its nature and its greatness, its Divine source, and its incomprehensible character.

I. The nature of this peace is such that it is denominated the "peace of God." For this we assign the following reasons: (1) Because it is that for which God made man at first; it is the realisation of His original idea of the happiness of humanity. (2) To this general statement you might add that religious blessedness, as now experienced by humanity, is denominated the peace of God because it is the result of His merciful interposition for man as well as the realisation of His original ideas respecting him. (3) The blessedness of the spiritual life in man is denominated the peace of God because, in addition to its including restoration to the happiness for which God originally designed him and the possession of that which God supernaturally provided for by the Gospel, it is that which is immediately produced by God's Spirit, and is thus in some degree of the nature of a direct Divine donation. (4) It might be said perhaps, in the last place, that religious peace is the

peace of God because it is sustained, nourished, and enlarged by those acts and exercises, private and public, which bring the soul into contact with God.

II. The second thing is the statement in the text that this peace of God "passeth all understanding." (1) The peace of God in the soul of man, or the felt blessedness of the religious life, passes the understanding of the men of the world. (2) The peace of God, as a felt, conscious, and experienced blessedness, passes the understanding of the Christian himself. (3) The peace of God, looked at in connection with the facts and agencies from which it springs, is a thing which passes the understanding even of angelic intelligence. In the mystery of God, of the Father and of Christ, there are "treasures of wisdom" laid up which no created intelligence will ever comprehend, and which eternity will not exhaust. But this mystery is precisely that out of which flows to man the power of God; the stream partakes of the nature of its source, and hence the Divine gift of the incomprehensible God itself surpasses "all understanding."

T. Binney, *King's Weigh-house Chapel Sermons*, p. 106.

The Warrior Peace.

The great mosque of Constantinople was once a Christian church, dedicated to the Holy Wisdom. Over its western portal may still be read, graven on a brazen plate, the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." For four hundred years noisy crowds have fought, and sorrowed, and fretted beneath the dim inscription in an unknown tongue; and no eye has looked at it, nor any heart responded. My text is Christ's offer of peace. The world offers excitement; Christ promises repose.

I. Mark, first, this peace of God. What are its elements? (1) It must be peace with God; (2) it is peace within ourselves.

II. Notice what my text tells us that the peace of God does: it takes upon itself warlike functions, and garrisons the heart and mind. The peace of God, which is peace militant, is unbroken amidst the conflicts. The wise old Greeks chose for the goddess of Athens the goddess of Wisdom, and whilst they consecrated to her the olive branch, which is the symbol of peace, they set her image on the Parthenon, helmed and spear-bearing, to defend the peace which she brought to earth. So this heavenly virgin, whom the Apostle personifies here, is the

"winged sentry, all skilful in the wars," who enters into our hearts, and fights for us to keep us in unbroken peace.

III. Notice how we get the peace of God. (1) Trust is peace; (2) submission is peace; (3) communion is peace. You will get no quiet until you live with God; until He is at your side you will always be moved.

A. MACLAREN, *The Unchanging Christ*, p. 115.

REFERENCES: iv. 7.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. iv., No. 180; vol. xxiv., No. 1397; J. H. Thom, *Laws of Life after the Mind of Christ*, 2nd series, p. 1; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. v., p. 31; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 280; T. Arnold, *Sermons*, vol. v., p. 238; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 3rd series, p. 446; H. Melvill, *Penny Pulpit*, No. 3753.

Chap. iv., ver. 8.—**"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things."**

WHEN the Apostle wrote these words, he was filled with the best of all loves. These grand words were almost the last outpouring of the fulness of the Apostle's love. Everybody knows them; everybody admires them; everybody is conscious of an undefined pleasure in them.

I. Observe that all the good and holy things of the text purify. St. Paul does not say, Do them, but what is far more: "Think on them." The word means literally, Take them into your mouths; dwell on them; imbue your very spirit with them; for there is life in them when fostered in the inner life of which the outer life is only a reflection. Every mind must have its thoughts, and every thought must have its food. Thought dies without food. Some men think too abstractedly; some men think much of the evils which they wish to avoid; that is vainness: the thought may take the bad character even from the wrong thing, which it is the object of that very thought to destroy. It is far safer, it is far better, and far more effective to think of the true, the holy, and the good.

II. The more you meditate upon the truth, the honesty, and the justice which regulate the sacred transactions between Heaven and man—that is, the more you see the Cross of Christ as the great embodiment of the mind of God and contemplate the highest truth as it is exhibited there—the more prepared you will be to go on to take a proper estimate of what is to be "the true, the honest, and the just" in the relations and dealings of the

present life. Whenever you can form this lofty conception of the inner and beautiful principle, your standard will be very high, and you will be better able to take measure of the circumstances of life. He will always make the best prophet the eye of whose mind is the most familiar with a Divine and prompt obedience.

J. VAUGHAN, *Fifty Sermons*, 1874, p. 151.

I. WE can all appreciate the importance of being able to guide and control our thoughts; we can all understand that it must be a serious thing to have lost or not to possess the power of doing so. And who has not known by experience something of the evil effects of thinking of the opposite things to those which St. Paul here recommends? St. Paul bids the Philippians entertain one kind of guests within, and by inference exclude or expel another. And which of us does not feel that there is wisdom in this caution? A man who lives much amongst the evil things of human nature, even if professional or other duty requires it of him, can seldom preserve unsullied the purity of his Christian feeling. And if such be the effect of an acquaintance with things hateful and impure in those who approach them at the call of business or duty, how must it be with those who live amongst them by choice? There are those who gloat upon the records of vice or crime, and find in them an attraction and fascination which is wanting in things lovely and of good report.

II. St. Paul's charge has a depth of wisdom and a wholesomeness of counsel scarcely noticed perhaps on its surface. We ought to cherish only such thoughts concerning others as are lovely and of good report; we ought to dwell by choice only upon virtues. The charge presupposes a power over the thoughts. And thus we are led to a serious reflection upon the importance of turning our faith to account in the work of regulating and disciplining thought. Of ourselves we can neither think nor do one good thing; but if the Gospel be true, we can think as well as do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us. Let us pray to God to *cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit.*

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 295.

REFERENCES: iv. 8.—F. W. Farrar, *Everyday Christian Life*, p. 46; T. M. Herbert, *Sketches of Sermons*, p. 158; W. B. Pope, *Sermons*, p. 213; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. ii., p. 200; *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. v., p. 115; R. M. Stewart, *Ibid.*, vol. xix., p. 121; H. W. Beecher, *Ibid.*, vol. xxvii., p. 148; J. G. Rogers, *Ibid.*, vol. xxviii.,

p. 28; *Ibid.*, p. 295; *Clergyman's Magazine*, vol. vii., p. 289. iv. 9.—W. G. Horder, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxx., p. 277; S. Martin, *Sermons*, 2nd series, p. 219; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 382.

Chap. iv., ver. 11.—**"Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."**

THE Secret of Happiness.

I. When St. Paul speaks of being *content*, he uses in the original a word which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. But this word, so rare with St. Paul, was in common use with all the schools of ancient Greece. Perhaps it would have been rendered more closely by "self-sufficing." St. Paul, as was his custom, took the old Greek word and baptized it; he gave it a new value; he read instinctively a new meaning into it. A Christian can only be self-sufficing, because in a Christian self is virtually suppressed. The old self is superseded by, is absorbed into, another self.

II. What are the ingredients of Christian contentment, and what are the ruling considerations which should make a Christian happy and thankful to be what he is? (1) The first motive, common in a large measure to St. Paul and to the wiser heathen, is that nothing earthly either lasts or satisfies. Why not acquiesce in whatever befalls us when all is relatively unimportant, relatively insignificant? (2) The second motive for cherishing a contented spirit is confidence in the wise and loving providence of God. We each are placed where we are. God is too wise not to know all about us and not to know what it is best for us to be and to have; and God is too good not to desire our highest good, and too powerful if He desires not to effect it. Our true course is to remember that He sees further than we do, and that we shall understand Him in time when His plans have unfolded themselves. (3) The third motive is that a Christian in a state of grace already possesses God: "If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." Surely, if these Divine words are real to us, we must know that nothing that is finite can be needed to supplement this our firm hold upon the infinite, that no created thing can add to what we have in possessing the Creator.

H. P. LIDDON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxv., p. 273.

REFERENCES: iv 11.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 320; *Ibid.*, *Morning by Morning*, p. 47; *Homilist*, 2nd series, vol. ii., p. 247; Parker, *Hidden Springs*, p. 1; H. W. Beecher, *Sermons*, 1st series,

p. 159; *Plain Sermons by Contributors to "Tracts for the Times,"* vol. vi., p. 204. iv. 11, 12.—E. Cooper, *Practical Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 189. iv. 11-13.—H. W. Beecher, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. vii., p. 124.

Chap. iv., ver. 12.—"I know how to be abased."

All men have owned that the knowledge which Paul claimed is not an easy one to win or keep. To know how to be poor! Plenty of people there are who are set down to the hard lesson. Plenty of people—yes, all people in different degrees and different ways—are led into some disappointment or abasement, but how few seem to stand in it evidently the stronger and the better for it. Poverty seems to men to be like the old fabled Sphinx, a mysterious being who has in herself the secrets of life, but holds them fast and tells them only in riddles, and devours the brave, unfortunate adventurers who try to guess at the wisdom she conceals and fail. The result is that few men seek her wisdom voluntarily. It is only when all other schools turn them out that they will go to hers.

I. It is evidently a distinct region of life in which Paul finds himself, where so long as he lives there is a special harvest for him to reap which he could reap nowhere else. To recognise the land in which he finds himself and to reap the harvest which he finds waiting for him there—that is the knowledge of how to be abased which Paul is thankfully claiming; that is what all his life and abasement has given him. "When I am weak, then am I strong." Is there not here a true intelligible picture of the way in which a man may know how to be abased? If it is possible to look upon a limited, restricted life as a certain kind of life, with its own peculiar chances and environments out of which a man, if he knows how, may get a character, and in which a man, if he knows how, may live a life which would be impossible elsewhere, then certainly this limited restricted life may win and hold an affectionate respect which is a positive thing and may be very strong and real. We need not be haunted with the demon of comparison; we need not say whether the cultures and pleasures of abasement are greater or less than those of abundance; enough that it has its own, peculiar to itself and full of value. Life is a medal with two sides; the "other" side, as we choose to call it, has its own image and superscription, and is not made up only of the depressions which are necessary to make the elevations on the face. Not to all men, not to any man always, does God give complete abundance. To all men sometimes, to some men in long stretches of their lives,

come the abasement times, times of poverty, times of ignorance, times of friendlessness, times of distrust and doubt. But God does not mean that these times should be like great barren stretches and blanks in our lives, only to be travelled over for the sake of what lies beyond. To men who, like Paul, know how to be abased, they have their own rich value. To have our desire set on nothing absolutely except character, to be glad that God should lead us into any land where there is character to win—this is the only real explanation of life.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Light of the World*, p. 179.

Chap. iv., ver. 12.—"I know how to abound."

I. THE phrase is very simple. Behind the duty of being anything lies the deeper duty of knowing how to be that thing in the best way and to the best result. No man has a right to be anything unless he is conscious that he knows how to be it, not with a perfect knowledge—for that can come only by the active exercise of being the thing itself—but at least no man has a right to be anything unless he carries already in his heart such a sense of the magnitude and the capacity of his occupation as makes him teachable by experience for all that his occupation has to make known to him. This is the law which Paul suggests with regard to abundance. Wealth is a condition, a vocation, he declares. A man may have the condition and not have, not even seek to have, the knowledge of how to live in that condition. Go to, ye rich men, and learn how a rich man ought to live.

II. Is it possible for us to put our finger on this mysterious knowledge of St. Paul, and say exactly what it was? I think we can. It must have been a Christian knowledge. Imagine that to his meagre life there had been brought the sudden prospect of abundance. "To-morrow, Paul, a new world is to be opened to you. You shall be rich; you shall have hosts of friends; all your struggles shall be over; you shall live in peace. Are you ready for this new life? Can your feet walk strong and sure and steady in this new land, so different from any land where they have ever walked before?" What will Paul's answer be? "Yes. I have Christ; I know my soul is in Him. I am His servant; nothing can make me leave Him. With the power of that consecration, I can rob abundance of its dangers, and make it the servant of Him and of my soul. I shall not be its slave; it shall be mine. I will walk at liberty because I keep His commandments." The power by which Paul could con-

fidently expect to rob abundance of its dangers and to call out all its help was the knowledge of the true perfection of a human soul in serving Christ.

III. In each of the several departments of our life it is not enough that a man shall have attained abundance: he must also know how to abound in riches, in learning, in friendships, in spiritual privilege; there is a deeper knowledge which alone can fasten the treasure which he has won, and make it truly his, and draw out its best use. What a great principle that is! Under that principle a man may even be the master of the heart and soul of some possessions whose form he does not own. I know that Jesus, the poor Man who walked through rich Jerusalem and had not where to lay His head, had still the key to all that wealth. We cannot attain to all abundance in this one short life; but if we can come to God and be His servants, the knowledge of how to be things which we shall never be may enter into us. In poverty we may have the blessing of riches, in enforced ignorance the blessing of knowledge, in loneliness the blessing of friendship, and in suspense and doubt the blessing of peace and rest.

PHILLIPS BROOKS, *The Light of the World*, p. 157.

REFERENCE: iv. 12.—Spurgeon, *Morning by Morning*, p. 41.

Chap. iv., ver. 13.—"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I. THE context shows that it is more of bearing than of doing that St. Paul speaks. He has been initiated, he says, into the great mystery of contentment. He knows how to reconcile himself to every extreme, how to conduct himself in plenty and in hunger, in abundance and in need. It is true in every sense of a Christian, certainly it was true in every sense of St. Paul, that he can do all things through Christ strengthening him; but here we are especially called to notice that Christ enabled St. Paul, and can enable all who believe, to be contented with any condition and with any circumstances of life which the providence of God has been pleased to ordain. Contentment is the ready acquiescence of the heart and will in that which is, and is for us; it is the not reaching forth to that which is forbidden or denied to us; it is the not looking with eager desire through the bars of our cage at a fancied liberty or an imagined paradise without; it is the saying, and saying because we feel it in the deep of our soul, This is God's will, and therefore it is my will; it is the condition of one who is independent of all save God,

of one whom neither riches nor poverty, neither affluence nor want, neither success nor failure, neither prosperity nor adversity, can so affect as to make the difference to him of being a happy man or a miserable.

II. Such contentment is, as Paul himself here writes, of the nature of a secret or mystery communicated only by special revelation to a selected few. I have been initiated, he writes, into it. Who tells the secret? who initiates into that Divine mystery? It must be a person. We do not hear secrets from the whispering winds; we are not initiated into mysteries by common rumour or by the passing changes and chances of mortal life. That contentment which is in one sense a mystery is in another equally true sense a grace and a strength.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 311.

WE see here—

I. Jesus Christ strengthening His disciple and Apostle Paul. Every man needs strength, but no man has within him strength equal to the demands that are made upon him. An Apostle is no exception to this rule. The apostleship did not assist Paul's personal Christianity; but it rendered that Christianity more difficult and more arduous. Paul, the wonderful convert, the chief Apostle, was equal to all things only by Christ strengthening him.

II. Paul assured that all things were possible to him. He felt equal to all the labour and toil which duty could ever involve; he felt equal to all suffering which could become his portion. Not as a Jew, not as a child of Abraham, not as a disciple of Moses, but as a Christian, Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

S. MARTIN, *Westminster Chapel Sermons*, 1st series, p. 126.

REFERENCES: iv. 13.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. vi., No. 346; *Homiletic Quarterly*, vol. ii., p. 268; G. Brooks, *Five Hundred Outlines*, p. 107; *Sermons on the Catechism*, p. 1; F. Temple, *Rugby Sermons*, 1st series, p. 1.

Chap. iv., ver. 17.—"I desire that fruit may abound to your account."

I. IN a certain sense all almsgiving abounds to the account of the giver, all almsgiving, I mean, which is worthy of the name. I may be glad of the gift given, but I cannot call it almsgiving of a Christian kind unless there be two things in it: disinterestedness and self-denial. We must have no side aims, no crooked or selfish motives, in that almsgiving which is

to inherit the promise. A person must not give to be seen of men, and a person must not give because not to give would, be to be blamed by men, and a person must not give thus much because not to do so would appear mean and illiberal. These are bad motives, and half the almsgiving in Christian congregations is no doubt spoiled by them for the giver. Again, I cannot call it almsgiving in a high or Christian sense unless there is in it something of self-denial. I say again, it may do good without this, but it can bring no blessing after it. It is well from early years to associate the idea of giving to another with sparing from one's self. Let the little sum which you had intended to lay out upon self, in body or mind, be willingly and cheerfully given to another: to the relief of the body, the instruction of the mind, or the enlightenment of the soul, of some other person or persons for whom, as for you, Christ died. Then that is Christian almsgiving; it is the act of one who out of love to Christ gives away that which he would have had to spend. Now all such almsgiving brings after it fruit which abounds to the giver.

II. But most of all surely will this be so in cases where the act itself is an act of faith. To relieve distress, disease, destitution, when it stares you in the face, is better than not to relieve it; but it is oftentimes an act rather of natural kindness than of spiritual principle. But when you give in the cause of a Christian mission, you are doing that which can be prompted by no such motive; and it is the certain reaction of such almsgiving, such in motive and such in object, that it strengthens the faith out of which it springs.

C. J. VAUGHAN, *Lectures on Philippians*, p. 327.

REFERENCES: iv. 18.—J. Armstrong, *Parochial Sermons*, p. 192. iv. 19.—Spurgeon, *Sermons*, vol. xxix., No. 1712. iv. 21.—*American Pulpit of the Day*, p. 374; Wilkinson, *Thursday Penny Pulpit*, vol. viii., p. 94.

Chap. iv., ver. 22.—"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Cæsar's household."

THE Spirit of Christianity.

I. The words of the text suggest to us that the Gospel is a spiritually restoring power. It makes men, sinful men, saints; it is a power to raise, ennoble, and make morally strong, a power which the world needs and must experience before prosperity shall abound and peace on earth shall be enjoyed. The want of the world is saints—saints like those who were in Rome, and who during all the ages have been the salt of the

earth. Saints are those who stand right with God, right with all their brethren and mankind, and right with themselves. They become all this by the spiritual power of the Gospel, the spiritual energy which alone can turn sinners into saints, and the old mankind into a new mankind, zealous of good works. And all Churches should be gardens to grow such saintly men, who will go forth as the sacramental host of God's elect to do battle with sin in every form.

II. The words of our text suggest that the Gospel is a spreading power. It has within it a life which must expand and permeate all with whom it comes into contact. Like the light of the sun, it seeks to flood the world with heat, life, and glory; like the fragrance of the flower, it diffuses itself all around and sweetens the atmosphere of human existence. Christianity is a movement and a moving power. Under its inspiring and elevating influence civilisation advances, science makes progress, literature flourishes like a green bay-tree, trade and commerce are developed, and nations lifted to higher altitudes of moral and spiritual being. And as it moves on it blesses and scatters benefactions on all around. The soul is not saved for itself only, but for others also. Every real Church should be, and is, a company of men animated by the missionary spirit, and all its members should be living epistles, known and read of all men.

III. Further, the words of the text teach us that the Gospel imparts the spirit of true courage. Previously to the appearance of Christ in the flesh, the world recognised those who were animated by the spirit of bravery, and whose courage was embodied in action; but the courage we should now admire most is the moral courage which is ready to stand up for the right and the true, no matter the nature and extent of the opposition. And those are the real heroes who dare to be right, even with two or three, and are ever ready to obey God rather than man. Such courage is the fruit of the Gospel, and has been exhibited in its grandest manifestations in the history of the Christian Church.

IV. Finally, our text implies that the Gospel imparts a spirit of sympathy. This is needed in the world. The Gospel might have made those who received it righteous, brave, and heroic, but it would have failed in its mission if it did not at the same time impart a strong and genuine sympathy with all those who are called upon to shed tears, heave sighs, part with loved ones, and struggle hard with the opposing forces of everyday life.

Let us cultivate the element of sympathy, for it is an element of the Divine life in the soul. It is a strange, strong power, without which in many cases existence would be a burden, and earth a prison-house of despair. Let it be ours to dry the tear, to quell the fear, and make the burdens of others our own. In this way we shall weep with those who weep, rejoice with those who are glad, and thereby fulfil the law of Christ.

W. ADAMSON, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxxvi., p. 163.

REFERENCES: iv. 22.—W. Walters, *Christian World Pulpit*, vol. xxi., p. 382; G. Dawson, *The Authentic Gospel*, p. 101; *Preacher's Monthly*, vol. vii., p. 245.

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